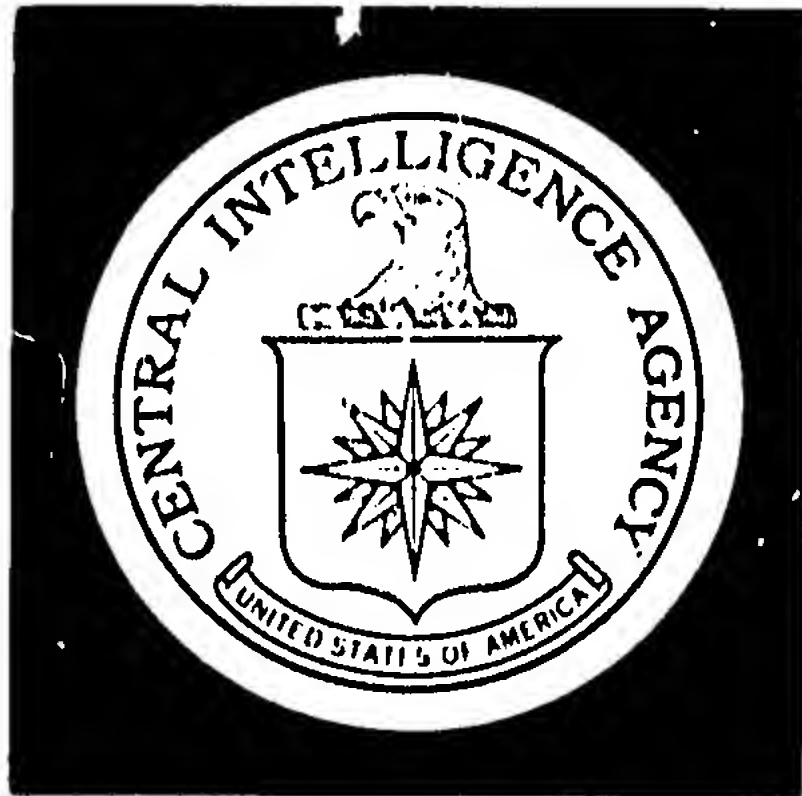


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# Intelligence Report

*The Purge of Lin Piao's 'Conspiratorial Clique':  
A Tentative Reconstruction*

*(Reference Title: POLO XLVIII)*

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THE PURGE OF LIN PIAO'S "CONSPIRATORIAL CLIQUE":

A TENTATIVE RECONSTRUCTION

MEMORANDUM FOR RECIPIENTS

This tentative reconstruction of the Lin Piao affair accepts as largely credible the case which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has made against Lin and his confederates. This conclusion is based upon a spliced-together examination of (a) developments observed prior to the dramatic events of last year's purges, and (b) the CCP's story of those events, as that story has become available

Additional Party materials and other documentation -- almost certain to become available -- will permit a filling out and firming up of the causes, particulars, and significance of the fall of Lin.

This present paper centers on Lin and his known proteges, their power position, their challenge to Mao, their subsequent fall, and what can be seen of the present leadership arrangements made by Mao and Chou En-lai. A companion study now in preparation by this Staff will focus on domestic and foreign policy issues related to the fall of Lin's group and to the present leadership arrangements.

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This Staff has received constructive comment on this study from a number of other offices of the Central Intelligence Agency, all of whom agree on the credibility of the essentials of the CCP's case against Lin, and several of whom agree in general with other findings of this study. Further comments will be welcome, addressed to the study's author [REDACTED] of this Staff.

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Hal Ford  
Chief, DD/I Special Research Staff

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## [REDACTED]

## THE PURGE OF LIN PIAO'S "CONSPIRATORIAL CLIQUE":

## A TENTATIVE RECONSTRUCTION

Available evidence now permits a reconstruction, with fair confidence, of the decline and dramatic fall of Lin Piao and other top-ranking Chinese military leaders. This reconstruction accepts as credible the essentials of the case against Lin and his proteges [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The main features of the Party's story of the past four years are consonant with certain developments -- notably organizational and policy changes -- observed but not fully understood at the time, and are consonant also with the past patterns of thought and behavior of the principal actor, Mao Tse-tung.

In brief, by early 1970 Mao had changed his mind about the suitability of Lin as his successor, and he was also looking for high-level scapegoats for a range of repudiated "ultraleftist" policies undertaken at various times during the Cultural Revolution. Mao began soon thereafter to undercut Lin's position organizationally. In response, Lin, in alliance with a "radical" civilian Party leader and some other military leaders, chose to contest Mao's will at the Party plenum of late summer 1970, on the issue of the chairmanship of the regime. Mao prevailed, and took further organizational steps against Lin which were visible to Lin. By early 1971, Lin and his proteges had concluded correctly that it was Mao's intention ultimately to purge them. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Again, as at the plenum,

they underestimated the awe and responsiveness that Mao inspired: in this case, his ability to command the obedience of other military leaders, even the great majority of the plotters' own proteges. When Lin's plans for a coup were frustrated, he attempted to flee to the USSR, dying in the attempt, and his closest proteges were seized and purged. Mao is now again faced with the difficult task of putting together a successor leadership, as he was at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

#### The Period of High Favor, 1966-69

The enigmatic and sickly military leader Lin Piao was designated (surprisingly) as Mao's successor in August 1966, in the first year of the massive purge of the Chinese Communist Party, government and military establishment known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Mao's main targets at the time were Liu Shao-chi (his then-designated successor) and other leading figures of the Party apparatus, an apparatus which Mao believed to be obstructing his policies. In that first year Lin seemed to establish himself as a hard-core Maoist in both senses of the term: completely loyal to Mao, and predisposed to the same militant, radical line that Mao himself favored in that period. Both Mao and Lin appeared to have differences with the more moderate Premier Chou En-lai.

In the second year, when China was in effect under military occupation by the PLA which Lin headed, Lin's position became more complicated. His generally "conservative" PLA came under attack by mass organizations encouraged by civilian radicals in the Party leadership, the officers of a special purging organ called the Cultural Revolution Group (CRG). Sometimes

Lin seemed to act to protect PLA leaders, and sometimes he did not. Chou En-lai and his proteges also came under "radical" attack, and Chou had to intervene with Mao to reverse Peking's counter-productive "revolutionary" diplomacy. Some second-level leaders of the CRG were purged, in part as scapegoats for repudiated policies.

In the third year of the Cultural Revolution, in the face of the Soviet threat, Mao put down the militant mass organizations, placed the provisional organs of government throughout China largely in the hands of military leaders, and prepared to build the new provincial-level Party committees around these same military men. In this period, Mao, Lin, Chou and the remaining CRG leaders seemed to be working together to these ends.

Throughout those zigs and zags of the Cultural Revolution, Lin had steadily strengthened his personal position. He had named his closest proteges to concurrent positions in the most important organs of command and control of the PLA, he had reorganized the Military Region headquarters to place almost all of them under the command of his proteges, and he had secured the appointment of such proteges to the most important provincial posts concurrently. This was the shape of an "independent kingdom," should Mao ever come to regard it as that.

Mao did indeed come to regard it as that. However, at the end of the third year, in April 1969, when the Party's long-delayed Ninth Party Congress was held, Lin Piao seemed to get Mao's blessing in all that he had done. Lin gave the main report to the Congress, and the new Party Constitution confirmed him as Mao's successor without an election -- thus heading off any possible election, after Mao's death, of the more popular Chou En-lai. The new Central Committee (more than 40 percent PLA) named a new Politburo in which PLA figures constituted the largest group, and in which Lin and five of his closest

proteges seemed to form the most cohesive group. This group consisted of Lin, chief-of-staff Huang Yung-sheng, Air Force commander Wu Fa-hsien, Navy leader Li Tso-peng, Logistics chief Chiu Hui-tso, and Lin's wife and staff office chief Yeh Chun. (This group of six was to be the core of the "counter-revolutionary conspiratorial clique" purged in September 1971.) At the same time, Mao in a speech to the first Party plenum voiced his concern about the responsiveness of the PLA to the civilian Party leadership. In other words, the issue that had led to the downfall of the Party-machine leaders around Liu Shao-chi in the first year of the Cultural Revolution -- the responsiveness of the governing apparatus to Mao's will -- was re-emerging with the new apparatus, the PLA.

#### Lin's Decline in Mao's Regard, 1969-70

It is apparent in retrospect that at some time in the year following the Ninth Party Congress Mao changed his mind about Lin as his successor. Mao's increasing concern about the responsiveness of the PLA -- for which Lin as its leader was responsible -- evidently led Mao to conclude that Lin himself was not properly responsive. As a related matter, Lin and others may well have been unwilling to accept the new Mao-Chou line -- formulated in 1969, withdrawn for a time in 1970, later restored -- that the USSR had become the main enemy of China, replacing the U.S. in that role; and Mao may have been made aware that Lin's group did not accept this. Further, Lin and his proteges may well have carried out the "preparations against war" campaign in such a way as to enhance their own power position, as later charged. Further, the investigation of the "5/16" group -- a hypermilitant mass organization which had sought in 1967 to bring down Chou En-lai and which symbolized not only



a range of repudiated ultraleftist policies but the fundamental sin of "conspiracy" and the ancillary practice of political assassination -- may well have turned up something damaging to Lin and some of his proteges. And with the decline and dissolution of the Cultural Revolution Group, Lin and Chou En-lai -- who during 1969 apparently became Mao's principal advisor and favorite lieutenant -- may well have come into conflict with respect to supervising and directing the re-emerging Party apparatus. Finally, Mao needed some additional scapegoats -- this time, high-level scapegoats -- for the self-defeating excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

In any case, in March 1970 Mao made a proposal which Lin rightly interpreted as reflecting a lack of confidence in him. This was the proposal not to restore the post of Chairman of the regime. Lin thought the post important, presumably because the Chairman would be the ranking officer of the government (over Premier Chou) and also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Thus Mao's attitude toward the post, and toward its eventual occupancy by Lin, was a critical test of Mao's attitude toward Lin himself.

Mao apparently began to take organizational steps against Lin, steps securing Mao's own control of Peking, during the summer of 1970, prior to the second Party plenum of August-September 1970. On 1 June, Wen Yu-cheng, a key protege of Lin's, the commander of the Peking Garrison -- a critical post, commanding the immediately available military forces in Peking -- made his last appearance, and was probably removed from the post soon thereafter. Although his successor was not identified until 1971, from summer 1970 no leaders of the Peking Garrison were proteges of Lin's. Moreover, by August 1970 the leadership of the reactivated General Political Department of the PLA was in the hands not of proteges of Lin but of proteges of other military leaders. Lin probably saw both developments as further indicators of his decline in favor.

[REDACTED]

At the Party plenum of August-September 1970, Lin and the civilian radical Chen Po-ta, who had been the chief of the abolished CRG, forced a test on the issue of the regime chairmanship. Presumably in the belief that they could win majority support, they led a concerted effort to get the post reinstated -- apparently with Mao himself to occupy it for the time being but with Lin to fall heir to it. Mao refused. Chen Po-ta was soon purged, in part for his opposition to Mao on this issue. Lin and his closest military proteges, whose roles at this plenum were concealed at the time, are now said credibly to have been criticized by Mao after the plenum for their own behavior. In Chen and Lin, Mao now had his high-level scapegoats, for whatever use he wanted to put them to.

Late in 1970, two more key military figures in Peking were purged. These were the commander and first political officer of the Peking Military Region, charged with conspiring with Chen Po-ta. Again their successors were not identified at the time, but [REDACTED] 25X1

[REDACTED] here again Lin failed to install his own men in these critically important positions. 25X1

[REDACTED] this latest failure was an important if not decisive factor in leading Lin to conclude that he was already marked for purging, as indeed he probably was. 25X1

In Mao's conversations with Edgar Snow in that period (late 1970), there was a striking lack of reference to Lin. Mao had evidently stopped talking about Lin as his successor or anything else. Snow learned that Chou En-lai, not Lin as earlier reported, was "in charge" of rebuilding the Party. And in outlining to Snow their new foreign policy (which included a declared willingness to welcome President Nixon), Mao and Chou failed to associate Lin (as the successor) with it.

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The Approach to the Crisis, 1971

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It is credible [redacted] that Lin and his closest proteges began as early as January 1971 to plan a military "coup" of some kind against Mao. It is apparent from subsequent developments that they again overestimated their own strength and underestimated Mao's.

[redacted]

In the early months of 1971, Mao was again visibly concerned with those failings of military administrators in general -- summarized at the time as "arrogance and complacency" -- that he had begun to warn against at the Ninth Party Congress. An intensive "rectification" of all Party cadres -- in which the military were most prominent -- was undertaken. There was probably a small purge of the PLA -- not reaching to the top levels -- at the same time. Many secondary military figures disappeared and are still missing.

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During the spring of 1971, Mao continued to approve the appointment of military men -- including Lin's proteges -- to key positions in Peking and in the provinces. This must have reflected a calculation -- which was to prove correct in summer 1971 -- that in the event of a showdown with Lin he would be able to split off from Lin the great majority of these proteges.

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It seems likely that by June 1971 Mao had an additional reason to purge Lin's group: namely, its opposition to the Mao-Chou foreign policy, in particular to the plans for President Nixon's visit, an initiative to which Mao and Chou were strongly committed. While such opposition cannot be proved, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] foreign policy was a genuine (if secondary) issue in the purge.

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Lin Piao made his last public appearance in early June. Mao may have begun soon thereafter the talks with regional and provincial military-political leaders in which he successfully sought assurances of their support in a showdown with Lin's group. Party briefings place Mao outside of Peking for most of the summer after the first week of July, and place him in South China -- engaged in such talks with a group of Lin's regional proteges -- in mid-August. Mao's interests in Peking were being protected by Party and military leaders in whom he had confidence -- e.g. Chou En-lai, the old Marshal Yeh Chien-ying (the two Chinese principals in the first talks with Dr. Kissinger), the General Political Department director and possible Peking MR commander Li Te-sheng, and Peking Garrison commander Wu Chung.

#### The Crisis, August-September 1971

In Mao's talks in mid-August with leaders of the Central-South area, in which proteges of both Lin Piao and Huang Yung-sheng were heavily clustered, Mao spoke of Lin and Huang as conspirators and of Lin as a commissioner of assassinations, and made clear that he

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intended to purge at least those two.

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On 7 September, Lin apparently took his family, on a Trident aircraft, to the summer resort of Peitaiho, not far from Peking, to await developments -- possibly including the results of an attempted assassination of Mao. The Party insists that Lin's group attempted to activate their assassination plan in early September, although almost all accounts agree that they were unable to do so: that is, no bullet was fired, no bomb was exploded. While it does seem very likely that Lin and his proteges had decided by that time that it would indeed be necessary to kill Mao, it is impossible on present evidence to judge whether they did in fact attempt to do so in early September.

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Mao may, however, have learned simply of Lin's plans.

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In any case, Mao returned to Peking on 12 September, prepared to take immediate action against Lin in Party

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councils. A meeting of Party leaders -- perhaps largely of military leaders -- was convened that same evening, either by Mao or by Chou En-lai in Mao's name. This meeting was very probably protected by security forces of the Peking Garrison. At the meeting, Mao's intention to purge Lin and his supporters was almost certainly made known.

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Lin and his wife and son -- leaving Lin's proteges behind in Peking -- were probably (as alleged) aboard the elite Trident aircraft which took off hurriedly from an airfield near Peitaiho after midnight on the night of 12-13 September and which crashed and burned at about 0300 on 13 September near the Soviet border, on a line with the big air complex at Irkutsk. (Alternatively, they were seized at Peitaiho, while lesser figures fled, and were soon executed.) The air standdown was apparently imposed immediately following this flight. Lin's principal proteges in Peking were condemned in the course of a prolonged meeting ending about 25 September. Chou En-lai and Yeh Chien-ying were particularly helpful to Mao in managing the crisis through this period.

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The Post-Lin Line and Leadership

The handling of this intensely embarrassing case, for both domestic and foreign audiences, has been a hard problem for Party leaders. The Party at first attempted to conceal the fall of Lin's group, telling even its own cadres that the missing leaders were engaged in military preparations against a Soviet threat. Briefings of Chinese audiences [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] did not begin until October. Deception of foreigners was intense through October and into November, and has continued: Chinese officials have still not admitted to foreigners -- in fact have denied -- that Lin is dead.

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Neither Lin nor any member of his group has been mentioned by China's public media. Lin's association with Mao -- e.g., in the "little red book" -- has been erased. There has been a selective discussion of the case in terms of "swindlers like Liu Shao-chi," emphasizing conspiracy and illicit organizational activity, and associating the purged group by implication with foreign enemies and with various rejected policies. [REDACTED]

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The PLA has been told repeatedly that it is to be subordinated to the civilian Party leadership, that opposition to Party policies (including foreign policy) will not be tolerated, that Party policies must be faithfully implemented, that the PLA must learn humility, and that the authority of military administrators vis-a-vis civilian Party cadres is in general to be reduced. In other words, the PLA is to be returned to a more nearly traditional role.

The Party is promising at the same time that an obedient and humble PLA need not fear another large-scale purge, on the order of 1966-67. A fairly substantial purge has already been carried out.

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The purge has clearly not been completed at any level, and the number of victims may rise considerably in the course of the next year.

Mao looks to be still the Party's dominant figure, in the terms used by himself in late 1970: he points the general direction, formulates or approves the formulation of the regime's principal policies, and signs directives, leaving day-to-day operations to Chou En-lai and Chou's Party apparatus and government machinery. And he is probably still dominant in the sense of having the power to elevate or purge any other Party leader or small group of leaders.

Mao's domination is increasingly qualified. He is old, his health is probably deteriorating

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[redacted] and he has lost prestige. It is doubtful that he could point China in any general direction other than the one he has been taking -- that is, it is doubtful that he could turn hard left again. He relies on a chief lieutenant, Chou, who sees many things differently than he does. And he is still heavily dependent on the PLA. If he were to choose to replace Chou's group or to return the PLA fully to its traditional role, it seems unlikely that he would have the time to do either. Increasingly, Mao's lieutenants will be looking past him to the post-Mao situation.

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Nevertheless, the main lesson of the past ten years, for other Party leaders, has to be that one challenges Mao, or takes action behind his back, only at great peril. Other Party leaders, while making arrangements for their futures, will probably try above all not to provoke the old man's suspicion or hostility in his remaining time. The chief near-term threat to Mao, however marginal, from other leaders, looks still to be assassination. Mao's fear of it may have been a factor in his failure to appear on May Day.

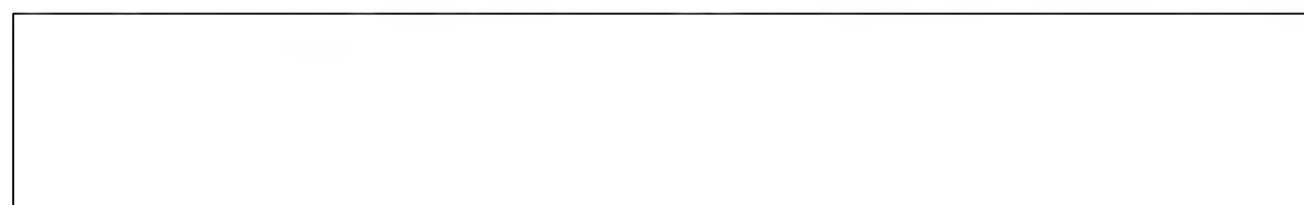
Chou En-lai's status and authority have been greatly enhanced. At the head of the Party apparatus and the government machinery, he has apparently been acquiring authority as well over the military establishment. The general direction of Chinese policy since 1969 has clearly been congenial to Chou, and President Nixon's visit was a visible personal triumph for him. As observed during that visit, Chou takes pains not to appear to be challenging Mao: he is deferential to Mao, he gives Mao the credit for formulating even those policies he himself has formulated, and he is meticulous in getting Mao's approval for important steps. The clever Chou will probably survive and prosper.

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Mao and Chou -- now the only other primary leader -- are proceeding carefully and deliberately with the task of assembling another successor leadership. They are now operating with a relatively small central team, composed both of old comrades of Mao's and Chou's and of younger figures who rose during the Cultural Revolution. The military leaders are, of course, largely a new set, and are not proteges of any single military leader, as were those purged with Lin Piao.

Because it is hard at best to carry out Mao's policies to his satisfaction, and because mismatched groups of leaders can be expected to continue to compete for Mao's (and Chou's) favor, some members of the current team -- both military and civilian -- will probably fall. Should Mao die, Chou could probably dominate the leadership (although not to the same degree,, and could be expected to make further changes, reducing the importance of Maoist ideology and of the surviving ideologues. Should both Mao and Chou die in the next year or two, no single figure among the surviving leaders would seem strong enough to dominate. Ironically, the PLA, put down so hard in the past year, would in those circumstances probably be in the best position to provide the dominant group.



ANNEX

THE PURGE OF LIN PIAO'S "CONSPIRATORIAL CLIQUE":  
A TENTATIVE RECONSTRUCTION

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
I. THE PERIOD OF HIGH FAVOR, 1966-69. . . . .	.A-1
II. LIN'S DECLINE IN MAO'S REGARD, 1969-70 . . . . .	.A-13
III. THE APPROACH TO THE CRISIS, 1971 . . . . .	.A-29
IV. THE CRISIS, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1971. . . . .	.A-45
V. THE POST-LIN LINE AND LEADERSHIP . . . . .	.A-61





## ANNEX

I. The Period of High Favor, 1966-69

In the first year of the Cultural Revolution (officially beginning in May 1966), Lin Piao seemed to establish himself as a hard-core Maoist "radical," who cooperated with Chen Po-ta and other civilian radicals of the central Cultural Revolution Group in destroying the Chinese Communist Party and purging the Chinese Communist armed forces (PLA) which he headed. In the second year, Lin's position seemed more complicated, as his generally "conservative" PLA came under attack by those same "radicals." He used that year to bring the PLA under the domination of his own proteges and to install such proteges in key positions in the re-emerging governmental machinery and Party apparatus, thus beginning to build an "independent kingdom." At the end of the third year, Lin seemed to have Mao's blessing in what he had done: the new Party Constitution confirmed him as Mao's successor, and Lin and his closest proteges became the largest cohesive group in the new Politburo. This was the group that was to be purged in September 1971.

The New Successor: The great purge of the Chinese Communist hierarchy which took place under the banner of the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" actually began in December 1965, with the arrest of the PLA's chief-of-staff and political security supervisor, and of other leaders believed to be plotting a "coup." The Cultural Revolution began officially in May 1966, when a Central Committee circular made clear that a great purge of "the party, the government, and the army" lay

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[REDACTED]

ahead.\* The same circular set up a central Cultural Revolution Group, outside the Party apparatus, to conduct the purge; its officers were a group of civilian radicals, led by Mao's longtime factotum Chen Po-ta and including Madame Mao. At the same time, Lin Piao, in the main speech to an enlarged meeting of the Politburo, denounced several arrested Party leaders, spoke at great length of the importance of preventing a "coup," called for resolute support of Chairman Mao and adherence to his "thought," and promised harsh punishment to Mao's opponents.

While Mao was preparing to unveil the young Red Guards as the main instrument to attack the Party, the Central Committee met in early August 1966 to approve Mao's design for the Revolution and his rearrangement of the Party hierarchy, in particular his purge of his previously-designated successor, Liu Shao-chi.

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Lin emerged from this as the sole vice-chairman of the Party and thus the newly-designated successor to Mao. The plenum confirmed Chou En-lai as the third-ranking Party leader, and added Chen Po-ta (among others) to the Politburo standing committee, the organizational core of power in China. In the same period, Lin told PLA leaders that the harsh standards used to purge the Party were also to be used to purge the PLA, and he named Chen Po-ta's deputy, Madame Mao, as "advisor" to (de facto chief of) a special Cultural Revolution Group which was to be used to conduct this purge of the PLA.

*\*A group of Party-machine figures purged at this time -- spring 1966 -- was also charged with plotting a "coup." This was to be a central charge against many of the high-level Party leaders purged in the Cultural Revolution, and was eventually to be made against Lin Piao himself.*

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Lin and the Purge of the PLA: The Red Guards made their appearance in mid-August, and began -- on Mao's explicit directive -- to "bombard" the Party apparatus. Their continuing guidance came from Lin Piao (in general terms) and from Chou En-lai and the officers of the central CRG (in more specific terms). From the start, there were marked differences in the lines taken by Lin and the CRG leaders on one hand and Chou on the other: Lin and the civilian radicals of the CRG tended to incite militancy and violence, whereas Chou did not.

Chou probably had from the start a good sense of where mindless militancy would lead. He could judge in the autumn of 1966 that it would seriously disrupt the work of his government machinery and in particular the conduct of his longtime specialty, foreign policy. Mao himself foreshadowed the extension of the Cultural Revolution into foreign policy by calling in September 1966 for the "revolutionization" of Chinese missions abroad and of Peking's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And Lin Piao soon added his voice to those calling for attacks on the government -- the entire structure over which Chou as Premier presided -- as well as on the Party.

During the early winter of 1966-67, Lin Piao backed Madame Mao (in the starring role) in a widening purge of the PLA. This purge removed the second-ranking officer of the Military Affairs Committee (MAC, the Party organ which directed and controlled the entire military establishment), who was also accused of plotting a "coup," and removed as well many other central and regional military leaders, several of whom were said to be co-conspirators in a planned "coup." Those purged were not proteges of Lin himself.

Mao ordered the PLA into action as an instrument of the Cultural Revolution early in 1967. The PLA rapidly became the de facto government of China outside Peking, and it took over the regime's public security apparatus. Thereafter, Lin continued methodically to

purge the PLA and to reorganize the regional and provincial military commands, but in small groups, not risking a general revolt which would lead to chaos.

During this stage of the Cultural Revolution, some of Lin's longtime military proteges came under Red Guard attack, and Lin had to take action to save them. Several proteges and friends of Chou En-lai's also came under such attack. Chou, at that time less close to Mao than was Lin, was less successful than Lin in protecting his proteges. At the same time, a "revolutionary rebel" group -- the adult successors of the young Red Guards -- began to "supervise" (that is, disrupt) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the months to follow, Chinese missions abroad were to be turned into centers for the propagation of various extreme features of Mao's "thought," leading -- as Chou En-lai probably foresaw -- to counteraction by local governments, retaliation or "revolutionary" lines by Peking, and the international isolation of Peking.

Through the spring of 1967, Lin remained generally militant in his attitude toward the PLA as a whole. Following Mao's judgment in March 1967 that the PLA in restoring order had acted too vigorously against mass organizations, Lin in late March imposed severe restrictions on the PLA's use of force against such organizations, thus putting the PLA at a disadvantage against its young antagonists, and probably alienating some PLA leaders from Lin himself. This containment of the PLA was predictably followed by a wave of unprecedented violence on the part of mass organizations, which led in turn to a new stage of the Cultural Revolution in which Lin was forced to play a more complicated role.

Lin and his Proteges: Rather than authorizing the PLA to use the necessary force against mass organizations, Mao -- whose progeny these organizations were -- chose at first to try to negotiate agreements among contending mass organizations, or, where necessary, to choose among



them. In July 1967, the already agitated situation was made much worse when an MR commander refused to cooperate with a delegation from Peking which was dealing with mass organizations in his area. The MR commander was quickly broken, and Lin himself -- still clearly in a "radical" position -- threatened action against other such commanders. In late July, Red Flag, the Party theoretical journal supervised by Chen Po-ta, head of the central CRG, called unmistakably for another substantial purge of the PLA. This call was in the spirit of Mao's earlier directives, and may have been explicitly approved by Mao (who was out of Peking at the time). Lin's response to this call still cannot be evaluated with confidence. On one hand, he called other MR leaders to Peking to give them some tough "instructions" -- inter alia, to obey orders from Chen Po-ta's CRG. On the other hand, he did not associate himself with the late July call for a larger purge. Possibly acting on new orders from Mao, other Party leaders -- including Chen Po-ta -- soon withdrew the call for a larger purge. In late August, Mao himself went on record as opposed to a larger purge.

Lin took early action to reshape the PLA/CRG, the special group charged earlier with purging the PLA. The previously ultramilitant Madame Mao was dropped from the group (surely with Mao's approval). Lin reorganized the PLA/CRG around a group of his own longtime and now closest proteges, some of whom had been under Red Guard attack earlier in the year, but who were not clearly identified with either "radical" or "conservative" positions. These included Wu Fa-hsien (the Air Force commander), Li Tso-peng (the Navy's first political officer), Chiu Hui-tso (the chief of Logistics) and Yeh Chun (Lin's wife, and the head of his staff office). All were to be accused in 1971 of conspiring with Lin against Mao.

In the same period (August 1967), violence against objectives in an area of Chou En-lai's concern -- the Ministry

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of Foreign Affairs, the foreign minister, and foreign missions -- reached its highest point. This violence [redacted]

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went so far as to place the Foreign Ministry under "revolutionary rebel" control for a time, and culminated in the burning of the British mission and the beating of British officials in late August. Chou moved quickly -- apparently intervening with Mao -- to regain control of the Ministry, to prevent the purge of his protege the foreign minister (although the latter became inactive), and to prohibit further violence against foreign missions.\*

Soon thereafter, with Mao now persuaded (whether by events or by persons) that the Revolution had moved too far to the left, Party leaders denounced the so-called "5/16 Group," an exceptionally militant mass organization. This group was to serve as the symbol of two discredited policies -- violence and threats against the PLA, and the whole spectrum of "Red Guard diplomacy" -- and, even more importantly, the offenses of "conspiracy" and political assassination. In September 1967, three secondary leaders of the CRG were purged -- in part for their own excesses, in part as scapegoats for the failure of policies which at one time Mao himself had encouraged.

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*\*Lin Piao's personal position on "Red Guard diplomacy" is not known. However, his earlier writings related to foreign affairs had strongly encouraged "people's war" against other governments, and had shown little sense of the value of conventional diplomacy. Moreover, Lin had joined Mao in June 1967 in giving a hero's welcome (home from Indonesia) to the Chinese foreign officer who was soon to lead the attacks on the Foreign Ministry and foreign missions. At least so long as his own proteges were not under attack, Lin seemed in general to encourage "radical" -- even extreme -- initiatives.*

However, Chen Po-ta and his close associate Madame Mao remained in Mao's favor.

Soon thereafter -- sometime before January 1968 -- Lin Piao replaced the PLA/CRG with a Political Work Group which had roughly the same area of concern (indoctrination, examination and evaluation of PLA leaders), and he made it more responsive to the MAC -- through the MAC administrative unit -- than the PLA/CRG had been. The fortunes of Chen Po-ta's central CRG continued to decline, as in February 1968 another CRG leader was purged, and Chen himself may have had to make a self-criticism. In March, however, the CRG was able temporarily to reverse its decline. One of Lin Piao's own proteges, his C/S, gave the CRG this opportunity, by ordering the arrest of certain CRG staffers (probably PLA men) against the wishes of Madame Mao. The Madame prevailed, and the C/S and two other important military leaders, including the commander of the Peking Garrison, were purged. In the late March meeting which surfaced this case, Lin and Chou En-lai were both very deferential to the offended Madame Mao, and joined in praising the record of the central CRG in the Cultural Revolution. Ironically, Lin charged the purged group with the offenses which were to be attributed to himself and some other of his proteges in 1971 -- "conspiring," "plotting," "double-dealing," and building a "mountain stronghold." Indeed, Lin was already building a stronghold. This meeting announced two close proteges of Lin's -- Huang Yung-sheng and Wen Yu-cheng -- as respectively the new C/S of the PLA and the new commander of the Peking Garrison.

In subsequent months, there was a striking trend in the staffing of China's provincial-level "revolutionary committees," the provisional organs of government while the Party was being rebuilt. The chairmanships of almost all of the provincial-level committees formed in this period were given to career military men. When the

establishment of these committees was completed in September 1968, the great majority were in military hands, and of the 11 most important of them -- in the provinces containing the Military Region headquarters -- all but one were in the hands of apparent proteges of Lin Piao.\*

Lin took several actions in that period of March - September 1968 to strengthen his position in the military establishment. His close protege Huang Yung-sheng, the new C/S, became concurrently the secretary-general of the MAC and the chief of the administrative unit which supervised the Political Work Group (the de facto General Political Department). And Lin reorganized the MAC standing committee, its administrative unit, and the General Staff -- the regime's three most important organs in command and control of the PLA -- around his proteges. The most important of these proteges -- Huang Yung-sheng (who as C/S was the head of the ground forces), Wu Fa-hsien (the CCAF commander), Li Tso-peng (the Navy political officer), Chiu Hui-tso (the Logistics chief), and Wen Yu-cheng (the Peking Garrison commander) held leading posts in all three of these critical organs concurrently. This clustering of Lin's proteges demonstrated

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*\*In this same period, beginning in May 1968 and continuing until the Ninth Congress in April 1969, Mao was presenting some 14 people as China's most elite leaders, his first team. Among the 14 were Lin and four of his aforementioned closest proteges: Huang Yung-sheng, Wu Fa-hsien, Yeh Chun, and Wen Yu-cheng.*



strikingly his domination of the central military leadership. The picture was almost as striking at the regional level.\*

As of autumn 1968, the high-priority task was to provide a "hard core" of Party leadership within the revolutionary committee structure throughout China. Mao -- one would suppose, with Lin's hearty agreement -- apparently meant to have the military leaders already in

*\*Five of the 11 MR headquarters were under the commands of apparent proteges of Lin when the Cultural Revolution began: Shenyang, Nanking, Canton (three of the four most important), Tsinan, and Foochow. Two more -- Chengtu and Wuhan -- were reorganized in 1967 to come under the command of proteges of Lin. Two more -- Kunming and Urumchi -- were reorganized to the same end in 1968. Another -- Lanchow -- was to be reorganized in 1969. (These regional proteges in general were not as close to Lin as were his proteges in the central military leadership: that is, they were not given the same degree of preferment during the Cultural Revolution, and did not work as intimately with Lin. But they were proteges in the conventional sense of the term: they had spent much of their careers under Lin's command, had been advanced by him after he became Minister of Defense in 1959, and had been shown favor by him in the Cultural Revolution.) The eleventh and most important -- the Peking MR -- was not under the command of proteges of Lin in this sense. However, from 1967 to 1970 it was under the command of Cheng Wei-shan (commander) and Li Hsueh-feng (political officer), who were both purged late in 1970 for conspiring with Chen Po-ta. Lin himself was later to be charged with conspiring with those three in 1970. In other words, the Peking MR until late 1970 was controlled -- if the Party can be believed -- by men tied even more closely to Lin than were his recognized proteges.*

place in the revolutionary committees dominate the provincial-level Party committees as well. Authority in assembling and approving these Party committees was apparently divided between the military leaders outside Peking on one hand and the civilians of the central CRG on the other. That is, the "cores" of the forthcoming Party committees were apparently being proposed by the military men on the spot in the provinces and major municipalities, and were being approved by the CRG. In other words, Lin's PLA and Chen Po-ta's CRG were apparently working well together in 1968.

The Ninth Party Congress: Lin Piao made the main political report to the Ninth Party Congress in April 1969. Chinese Communist briefings since Lin's fall have suggested that Mao was not pleased with Lin's report, but it is hard to fix on any part of that report which could have offended Mao at the time.

In discussing Party-rebuilding, Lin's emphasis was on the need to put Party leadership at all levels in the hands of "true" Marxists. He meant Maoists, which as Mao and Lin had always defined it meant men who would follow Mao's lead wherever it took them.

In reviewing foreign affairs, Lin took the approved line. He denounced both the United States ("the most ferocious enemy of the people of the whole world") and the USSR ("the Soviet revisionist renegade clique"), and strongly stated Peking's policy of support of "revolutionary struggles" everywhere. While expressing Peking's favor for a negotiated settlement of the Sino-Soviet border dispute and for "peaceful coexistence" with the West, Lin called for preparations against a war launched by either the U.S. or USSR (or both).

This Ninth Party Congress adopted a new Party Constitution with an unprecedented provision confirming Lin Piao as Mao's successor without an election (thus heading off any possible election, after Mao's death, of the

more popular Chou En-lai), and providing for the Politburo standing committee to reconstruct whatever central Party apparatus it might need. The Constitution did not provide for a new Party Secretariat, as the concept was still in disfavor and the central CRG was still acting as a de facto secretariat.

The Ninth Party Congress went on to name a Central Committee composed in largest part (more than 40 percent) of PLA figures. This new Central Committee "elected" Mao and Lin as its only officers and named a five-man standing committee of the Politburo, identical with the de facto standing committee since 1966. This standing committee was composed of Mao, Lin, Chou, and the two ranking leaders of the CRG: Chen Po-ta, with whom Lin was later to be linked as a co-conspirator, and Kang Sheng, a security specialist who was to be sidelined in 1970 when Chen was purged. The new Politburo included Lin and five of the close proteges of Lin discussed above -- Huang, Wu, Li, Chiu, and Lin's wife.\* It also included two somewhat less close proteges of Lin, the Shenyang and Nanking Military Region commanders Chen Hsi-lien and Hsu Shih-yu, and a protege of one of these proteges. Thus the PLA leaders constituted the largest group in the Politburo, and Lin and his closest proteges the most cohesive group in it. However, Lin's men did not constitute a majority. There was clearly some distance yet for Lin to go, if he were to dominate either the Politburo standing committee or the full Politburo.

Mao in his late April 1969 speech to the first plenum of the new Central Committee admonished the PLA's military administrators throughout China to do a better job. While rejecting the Soviet charge that the military

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*\*Another close protege, Wen Yu-cheng, the Peking Garrison commander, was inexplicably passed over.*

was too heavily represented in China's governing structure, Mao said that the solution to local problems lay with the military and that the solution to the military's problems lay in its work.\* He went on to make several remarks -- addressed to all Central Committee members, expressly including Politburo members -- about the need to work carefully and avoid pride, and to proceed with particular care in rebuilding the Party. These remarks were the foundation of the subsequent campaign against "arrogance" and "complacency," especially on the part of the military administrators.

Mao in this speech associated himself with Lin's call for "preparations against war" (both material and spiritual preparations), a call which was also to become a national campaign. Lin was later to be charged with offenses under this heading.

In sum, Lin Piao seemed at the time to be in high favor with Mao, to be in a very strong position in the military structure, and to be moving toward a similarly strong position in the Party. His position in both the military and political structures, however, depended upon his retention of Mao's favor, and Mao had already made plain his concern about the responsiveness of the PLA -- the PLA for which Lin was responsible. As things were to turn out, Mao's attitude -- not Lin's position in the structure of power -- was to be decisive.

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*\*Mao had already symbolized his concern over the PLA's role -- not the numbers of PLA men in key posts, but the responsiveness of the PLA to the Party, meaning himself. He had had inserted into the new Party Constitution a provision that the PLA (among other components of the state and society) "must...accept the leadership of the Party."*

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II. Lin's Decline in Mao's Regard, 1969-70

It is apparent in retrospect that at some time in the year following the Ninth Party Congress of April 1969 Mao changed his mind about Lin Piao as his successor. It was probably in this period that Mao decided that Lin could not be relied upon to make the PLA -- still the governing apparatus -- reliably responsive to the civilian Party leadership. Lin may have been unreliable in other respects as well. For example, Lin's group may have been unwilling to accept the Mao-Chou line that the USSR had become the main enemy of China. In March 1970 Mao made a proposal which seemed to Lin to reflect a loss of confidence in him -- the proposal not to restore the post of Chairman of the regime. Lin was right, because Mao soon took other organizational steps against him -- removing a Lin protege from command of the Peking Garrison, and placing the General Political Department under the leadership of non-proteges of Lin.

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Mao took yet another step against Lin by reorganizing the Peking Military Region, again preventing Lin from installing his own men in the leading posts.

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By the end of 1970, Mao had apparently stopped talking about Lin: he had probably, by this time, decided not only to replace Lin as his successor but to purge Lin and his closest proteges.

Some Issues: The principal developments of the year following the Ninth Party Congress were Mao's increasing concern about the responsiveness of the PLA to the civilian Party leadership, the growing Soviet military



threat to China and the Chinese response to that, the all-out "investigation" of a mass organization (the "5/16" group) as a symbol of "conspiracy" against Party leaders, the related decline of the "radical"-led central Cultural Revolution Group, and the related rise of Chou En-lai. While the precise relationship among these interesting developments is still not clear, there were so many possible ramifications of each of them that it is not hard to believe that Lin got caught in some combination of circumstances that made him appear to disadvantage.

Mao's admonitions to the PLA at the Ninth Party Congress rose rapidly to the level of a campaign to ensure that the PLA work under "Party" leadership and work much better than before. In the joint editorial on the Party's 48th anniversary (1 July), it was insisted with unusual shrillness that the Central Committee of the Party was "the only center of leadership for the whole Party, the whole army, and the people throughout the country," and, again, that the PLA must "accept the leadership of the Party, ... carry out to the letter the line, principles and policies of the Party's Central Committee personally formulated by the great leader Chairman Mao." The joint editorial on Army Day (1 August) emphasized that "much work remains to be done," that this work must not be "crude and careless," that "Chairman Mao's proletarian line on army building" must be carried out in a "better way," that this must be done "under the leadership of the Party Central Committee with Chairman Mao as its leader," and so on.\*

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*\*The tone taken toward the PLA in the joint editorials on the same occasions in 1968 had been very different. The PLA was then the great teacher of the Chinese people and the most redoubtable foe of "class enemies." Indeed, it was said, one's "attitude toward the PLA is the attitude toward the dictatorship of the proletariat" (meaning, the re-emerging Party and Mao himself).*

While this campaign was never -- at least in its public manifestations -- of such intensity as to explain in itself the purge of the PLA's central leadership in September 1971, it seems likely that during 1969 the problem of the responsiveness of the PLA -- of the PLA for which Lin Piao was directly responsible -- came to be seen by Mao as the problem of Lin's own personal responsiveness to Mao. In other words, a Lin Piao who could not be relied upon in his principal area of concern could not be relied upon over the full range of concern of a successor to Mao. And there may well have been indications of Lin's unreliability in other areas of concern than the PLA.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1969, the Russians were establishing a credible possibility of a large-scale military attack on China. Lin himself in April 1969 had called on the nation to take the Soviet "tactical" threat seriously. In May and June, Chinese spokesmen took note that China was being threatened (as it indeed was) by Soviet air attacks on its nuclear installations. In August, the Soviets wiped out a Chinese unit which crossed the border from Sinkiang. In early September, continuing to threaten Peking, the Soviet C/S publicly suggested the possibility of a Soviet operation against China's Northeast.

The principal Chinese leaders -- Mao, Lin, and Chou -- responded in an apparently coordinated way. With Mao's permission, Chou on 11 September met with Kosygin and agreed to begin talks about the border, without insisting on the earlier precondition that Moscow "recognize" the inequitable nature of the old treaties. And Lin in his annual National Day (1 October) speech was notably milder toward the USSR than he had been in his Party Congress speech, denouncing the US enemy by name but failing

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to specify the source of "social-imperialism" (the USSR) or to refer to the border situation (the immediate military threat). The border talks soon got underway.\*

Probably animated largely by Mao's hatred and fear of the Russians, Peking followed with an initiative toward the United States in December 1969. In response to the U.S. withdrawal of naval patrols from the Taiwan Strait in November, Peking in December stated for the first time its willingness to receive the American representative in the Chinese Embassy in Poland in order to resume the Sino-American talks. In this double step forward, the talks were resumed in January 1970.

*\*Lin's relations with the Russians had always seemed to run parallel with Mao's. Living in the USSR from 1938 to 1941, under treatment for wounds, Lin had got on well with the Russians, but on returning to Yen'an in 1942 he had supported Mao in putting down the more pro-Soviet CCP leaders. As the commander of Chinese Communist forces in the Northeast (Manchuria) in 1945-48, he had again got on well with the Russians, but he had apparently not developed the special relationship with them which was attributed to certain other Chinese leaders later purged. From the late 1950s, with the Sino-Soviet split, Lin had joined Mao in downgrading Soviet military doctrine and practice. Throughout the 1960s, Lin in his public pronouncements had denounced Soviet positions in the same terms that Mao did, and in his unpublished talks had been as scornful of the Russians -- professionally and personally -- as Mao could wish.*

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There was, on the face of it, no good reason for any Chinese military leader to oppose these moves to reduce tension with both of China's principal enemies.

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It was in this period between April and December 1969 that the Party first formulated the line -- later to be withdrawn, then restored -- that the USSR was China's main enemy, replacing the U.S. in that role.

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It had been presumed all along that some Chinese military leaders had opposed the break with the USSR -- with its consequent depressing effect on Chinese military development and its imposition on the Chinese military establishment of another major enemy -- although after the purge of Peng Te-huai they would have kept quiet about it. Even among those who had genuinely supported Mao in the break, some Chinese military leaders -- men who had been Communists all their adult lives -- could be expected to be unable to regard the USSR as their main enemy and to act on this belief. It is possible that Lin Piao was among their number, that certain of his proteges agreed with him, that this group was simply unable to make the shift, and that this became evident to Mao in Party meetings or in private conversation.

As a related issue, there was the continuing "preparations against war" campaign. After Lin's fall, he and other military leaders were to be charged with having used the campaign as a cover for preparations for a military takeover. The campaign would of course have permitted military leaders to strengthen their positions, and they were to be expressly charged with having prepared various headquarters and bases for use in a "coup." This will be touched on later.

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Another related issue, during the spring and summer of 1969, was a renewal of disruptive behavior by mass organizations in China -- i.e. by their representatives in, or seeking places in, "revolutionary committees" and new Party committees throughout China. This misbehavior disappointed the expressed hopes of Mao (and Lin) for "unity" in the constructive stage of the Cultural Revolution. Peking's pronouncements showed a strong concern over the problems of factionalism and "anarchism," and related the latter to the threat of a Soviet attack; as Chou En-lai said, such "internal weakness" would encourage Soviet aggression. Thus the PLA was again authorized to use whatever degree of force was necessary to restore order. By December 1969, [redacted] there began an all-out "investigation" of the infamous 5/16 Group, the most militant of all mass organizations, the symbol of repudiated "ultraleft" positions of all kinds, the symbol of "conspiracy" against Party leaders, and the symbol of a recent grisly fact of Chinese life -- political assassinations.\*

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*\*The 5/16 Group had unquestionably carried out assassinations of rival leaders of mass organizations, and may have made attempts even on Party leaders. One such attempt may have been made in March 1970 -- on Hsieh Fu-chih, the Minister of Public Security -- while the investigation of the 5/16 Group was underway, and this in turn may have been an important factor [redacted] in the replacement of the Peking Garrison commander, Lin's protege Wen Yu-cheng. [redacted]*

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It would not have been hard, in the winter of 1969-70, to make a case relating Lin Piao to the 5/16 Group. For one thing, Lin had been the source of incendiary statements to mass organizations. Further, Lin had, on the record, minimized the offenses of PLA members of the 5/16 Group, describing them as true "Leftists" who had made mistakes.

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Thus the most that can be said is that the investigation of the 5/16 Group in the winter of 1969-70 may have turned up something damaging to Lin and certain of his military proteges -- some evidence, say, of "double-dealing," of conspiring against other Party leaders (e.g. Chou) with the leaders of the 5/16 Group -- which was made known to Mao and which Mao kept to himself for later use, not permitting it to be reflected in the Party documents of 1970.

The central Cultural Revolution Group (CRG), which may have been inactive for some months in its role as the Party's de facto secretariat, disappeared from view in December 1969 and was never thereafter reported to be acting in any capacity whatever. The civilian "radicals" heading the CRG who were to fall into disgrace (Chen Po-ta) or to become inactive (Kang Sheng) during 1970 were apparently in decline during the winter of 1969-70, a decline reflected in the abolition of their organizational base of power, the CRG. Moreover, Chou En-lai was described by Party leaders in 1970 as the Party's de facto secretary-general -- replacing both Chen Po-ta and Kang Sheng in that role -- and it seems reasonable to believe that Chou began to play that role at about the time the central CRG disappeared, i.e. in the early winter of 1969-70.

Although Lin and Chou appeared at the time to have resolved their earlier differences and to be playing complementary roles, it seems possible in retrospect -- with the benefit of more information on the activities of both men -- that Lin began at that time to see Chou as a threat to his own plans for dominating the Party apparatus. If so, he may have attempted -- as some later materials suggest -- to restrict Chou's authority in the role of de facto secretary-general, or even to prevent Chou from occupying the post at all. If so, this could have brought Lin into serious conflict with Mao during the winter, because there is abundant evidence -- not only in the reporting but in the entire course of Chinese policy after the Ninth Party Congress -- that by this time Chou was in the highest possible favor with Mao and was, indeed, his principal advisor and favorite lieutenant.\*

Mao's Crucial Proposal: Whatever the combination of circumstances that brought Lin into disfavor with Mao by or during the winter of 1969-70, in March 1970 Mao made a proposal which set in motion the train of events culminating in the destruction of Lin and the purge of his closest proteges in September 1971. This proposal was not to restore, in the new State Constitution, the post of Chairman of the regime -- a post parallel to, although far less important than, Mao's own post of Chairman of the Party, and which had been vacant since

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*\*It is ironical that this one of Mao's lieutenants who had been least predisposed to radical and militant courses had risen to the position of Mao's most influential advisor by the end of a militant Cultural Revolution designed for radical ends. But Chou seems never to have put himself in the position of seeming disloyal to Mao, which for Mao has always been the ultimate test*

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the purge of Liu Shao-chi in 1966. The post itself had been an empty one, in practice -- of symbolic importance only, another "Chairman" to stand beside the one true Chairman as his designated successor. Yet there is much evidence [redacted] that Lin thought the post important, and wanted at least to restore it -- even if he were not to occupy it himself immediately.

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Lin's willingness to stake so much on this question of the Chairmanship is probably the hardest thing to explain in developments of recent years. Lin's calculation as to the importance of the post itself must have been based on two considerations. One was that the Chairman would be the principal officer of the government, ranking Premier Chou En-lai. The other was that, at least under the old Constitution, the Chairman was the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and was autonomous in this role, not responsible to any other organ of government. If it was Lin's belief that Mao at the time was building up Chou En-lai and the government machinery as a counter-weight to Lin and the PLA (much as he had earlier built up Lin and the PLA against Liu Shao-chi and the Party apparatus), it would have made some sense for Lin to try to get the post of Chairman restored and, sooner or later, to get control of it. This would have given him superiority over Chou in all three hierarchies -- Party, military, government -- and in particular (although evidence is lacking that Liu Shao-chi in the post ever so much as moved a platoon) would have given him rather than Chou the right to name the Minister of Defense. It did not make good sense -- in fact, it was a disastrous mistake -- for Lin to make an issue of this post, because Lin over the years had had abundant opportunity to recognize the hazards of revealing personal ambition (as distinct from accepting responsibilities thrust upon him). But Lin apparently regarded Mao's attitude toward the restoration of the post -- and its eventual occupancy by Lin -- as a critical test of Mao's attitude toward Lin as the successor, and (to judge from developments at

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the Party plenum later in 1970) soon reached the judgment that he was ready to test his own strength against Mao's will.

It is not known at what time Mao made the actual decision not to restore the post-- but it was sometime before the plenum of August-September 1970, when it was revealed that he had made and reaffirmed this decision. Mao and Lin were the two principal officers of the committee formed in July 1970 to write the new Constitution, and Mao may have made the decision -- and informed Lin of it -- at that time.

The Second Plenum: It was apparently just prior to the Party Plenum of August-September 1970 that Mao made two changes in the central military leadership which were damaging to Lin. He removed Lin's protege Wen Yucheng (who last appeared on 1 June) from the critically important post of commander of the Peking Garrison

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Mao did not permit Lin to replace Wen with another protege.\* Moreover, Li Te-sheng, who was not a protege

*\*The exact time of Wen's removal is not known, but he had made frequent appearances before his last appearance, so it is reasonable to believe that he was removed soon after his last one, i.e., that he was out before late August. The new Peking Garrison commander was not identified until September 1971, but none of the Garrison's officers in that intervening 15 months was a protege of either Lin or Huang Yung-sheng.*

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of Lin's but rather of the Nanking MR commander Hsu Shih-yu, had been brought to Peking by August if not earlier to take over the General Political Department, charged with the indoctrination, investigation and evaluation of the PLA and its officers. Of the two earlier-identified deputy directors of this highly important Department, one was an apparent protege of Lin's, the other was not.

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Lin's Status in Late 1970: However the question of the Chairmanship was handled at the second plenum, and whatever the handling of the military leaders thereafter, Lin knew beyond doubt by the end of 1970 that he had declined in Mao's eyes. This knowledge was almost certainly reinforced by Lin's inability, at that time, to replace the purged leaders of the Peking MR with his own men. It was obvious at the time that Lin would want to have his proteges in those key posts just as in other MR headquarters, and it was regarded as an anomaly that he did not.\* Lin had now -- by the end of 1970 -- lost out on four key posts in a row -- the Garrison, the GPD, and the two MR posts.

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It does seem

*\*As in the case of the Peking Garrison, the new leaders or acting leaders were not identified (and have still not been), but it is apparent from Party documents that they were not proteges of Lin's.*

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in retrospect that Mao, during the second half of 1970, was taking important organizational steps in Peking to prepare for a showdown with Lin and his proteges. When the showdown came, in September 1971, the necessary military forces -- immediately, the Garrison forces, and in reserve, the MR forces -- were in Mao's hands.

In Edgar Snow's interviews with Mao in the late months of 1970 [redacted]

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[redacted] there was a striking lack of reference to Lin in Mao's remarks. Although Lin had again made the National Day (1 October) address in 1970 -- which was to prove to be his last public speech -- and People's Daily had begun at that time the practice of featuring photographs of Mao and Lin together (rather than Mao alone), Mao by late 1970 had apparently stopped talking about Lin altogether, as his successor or anything else. Moreover, Snow learned (apparently from Mao), and Chou confirmed, that Chou -- not Lin -- was "in charge" of rebuilding the Party. Moreover, even in talking with Snow about their new policy toward the United States -- to explore the possibilities for an improvement in relations at the government-to-government level, while emphasizing initiatives which would mobilize the American people against their government -- Mao and Chou did not associate Lin as Mao's successor with this new line, as would have been expected.

In these talks with Snow in late 1970, Mao showed considerable sensitivity to China's appearance of being dominated beneath his own level by the PLA. (Indeed, this sensitivity seemed at the time to be a possible explanation of Mao's failure to talk about Lin.) Mao described the PLA's admittedly striking degree of power as "temporary," and he defended the overall militarization of Chinese society as necessary in view of the Soviet military threat -- which had in fact seemed to be his



reasoning at the time. (Chou En-lai took a similar line with Snow on the role of the PLA, emphasizing the long-standing principle of Party leadership.) Mao told Snow that it would be wrong to judge his success in renewing the leadership as a whole solely on the basis of observation of the national and provincial leaders (mainly PLA figures), that the bulk of the new leadership produced by the Cultural Revolution was to be found at the county level, the "next generation" of Party leaders. Such remarks were further indications that Mao was not satisfied with the responsiveness of the military administrators, who were soon to be subjected to sharp public criticism.

Snow did meet briefly with Lin and found him to be feeble but relaxed and affable. Snow did not conclude that Lin was in disfavor or thought himself to be, although Snow was understandably much more impressed by Chou and -- correctly, as it turned out -- thought Chou to be playing the more important role of the two.

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over, the regime's media continued to describe Lin as "deputy leader," to present him as well as Mao as the authority for the Party's policies, and to give him high praise; pictures of Lin and Mao were displayed on important occasions, and Mao-Lin badges were issued.\*

In sum, it seems likely, in retrospect, that by the end of 1970 Mao had decided not only to replace Lin Piao as his successor but to purge Lin and his closest

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proteges. Thus Lin was right in believing -- as Party briefings have presented him as believing -- that his situation was desperate.\*

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III. The Approach to the Crisis, 1971

It is credible, as alleged, that in or about January 1971 Lin Piao and his closest proteges began to plan a "coup" against Mao, in the belief that they themselves would otherwise be purged. It is also credible, as further alleged, that the group's design from the start included a plan to kill Mao if necessary. But it is not alleged that Mao discovered any such plans that early.

In the early months of 1971, Mao was visibly concerned -- still concerned, as he had been since 1969 -- with the problem of the reliability and responsiveness of PLA figures as administrators, throughout China. There seems to have been a small purge of the PLA -- not reaching to the top levels -- at that time. During the spring of 1971, Mao continued to approve the appointment of PLA figures -- including proteges of Lin -- to key positions, approval which must have reflected a calculation that in the event of a Mao-Lin showdown he could split the great majority of them off from Lin. However, the timing of Mao's decisive move against Lin may have been moved up during the spring of 1971

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By June, Mao probably had an additional reason to purge Lin's group -- its opposition to the Mao-Chou foreign policy, specifically to the plan to receive President Nixon. Mao may have begun, as early as June, the talks with military-political leaders outside Peking in which he successfully sought assurances of their support in a showdown with Lin's group. And he may have taken additional steps against Lin's group in Peking itself -- mainly concerned with assuring his own control of Peking -- in the early summer.

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Some Criticism and a Small Purge:

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The new provincial-level Party committees began to surface in December 1970, in the same pattern as the earlier revolutionary committees and Party core groups -- mostly dominated by military men, and almost all of the most important of them (in provinces containing the 11 MR headquarters) headed by proteges of Lin Piao. Even in retrospect, this is not startling, as these leaders (for the most part) had been selected long before, and had been approved by Mao and Chou. The practical problem for Mao in this connection, assuming that he had already

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decided to purge Lin and his closest proteges at the center, was how to prevent Lin from using the MR headquarters against him.

By late February 1971 the regime's military administrators at all levels were coming under heavy fire -- e.g. from Red Flag -- for "arrogance" and "complacency," and Peking directed that all cadres of the Party apparatus -- in which the military were most prominent -- undergo "open-door rectification" of these shortcomings. The Military Regions -- apparently beginning with the Shenyang MR -- began at this time to hold "political and ideological work" meetings concerned expressly with these problems. The proceedings of one such (later) meeting show it to have concluded that many PLA men in the structure of power -- including secretaries of local (non-PLA) Party committees -- were unreasonable and imperious, suppressed their critics, acted in opposition to Party policies, and even committed crimes. PLA leaders had all too often acted independently of local Party committees, had made decisions within the PLA's own Party committees and had imposed them on the local Party committees, had forced the local Party committees to seek PLA approval of their actions, and so on. PLA organs and personnel were henceforth to accept their subordination to local Party committees, or, if the local Party committee were headed -- as, at the provincial level, most were -- by men who were active PLA leaders concurrently, the civilian members were to be given larger roles.

A small purge of the PLA seems to have been set in motion in the early months of 1971. It did not reach as high as the ranking figures of the MAC and General Staff (positions held concurrently by the Politburo-level leaders who were to be purged in September), but many illustrious faces were missing in the early months of 1971 or made their last appearance on or about May Day, and some of them were probably purged before summer 1971. The missing included (and still include) the director of



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the Operations Department of the General Staff, two deputy directors of the General Logistics Department, many national and regional leaders of the Air Force (the service arm apparently hardest hit), some Navy figures, some of the leaders of the Artillery and Armored forces, and some of the leaders of less important arms such as Engineers and Railway Engineers and Signals.\*

Lin's "Bases": As previously noted, Mao probably concluded in the year following the Ninth Party Congress that Lin could not be relied upon to make the PLA properly responsive to Mao and other civilian Party leadership, had apparently begun to take organizational steps against Lin in Peking no later than the summer of 1970, and by the end of 1970 had probably marked Lin for purging. It is a striking fact that the appointments of military leaders continued in the early months of 1971, after this progression in Mao's thinking, and in a period in which Mao was visibly concerned about the problem of the responsiveness of the PLA. These appointments were striking both at the national level -- in the central Party apparatus and the central government machinery -- and at the provincial level, that is in the new provincial-level Party committees.

\*There was a curious development affecting the Air Force. Deliveries of military aircraft to operating forces sharply declined, from early 1971, while production increased, causing an unprecedented backlog of undelivered aircraft. One possible explanation is a belief that the Air Force was not to be trusted with these new aircraft, although it is not at all clear what use it was feared that these aircraft would be put to.

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[redacted] Lin's principal offense was that of attempting to install as many of his proteges as possible in key posts in the military establishment and in the developing Party and governmental apparatus. [redacted] it was an offense in which Lin appeared at least until June to have the collaboration of Mao and Chou, the latter making and the former approving such appointments.

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There is no entirely satisfactory explanation of these appointments. While it is true that failure to confirm in their posts men who had been selected long before would have given Lin's group warning that Mao intended to move against the group, Lin had already been given sufficient warning to lead him to conclude by the end of 1970 that he was marked for purging. The only credible explanation of these continuing appointments of Lin's proteges thus seems to be a calculation by Mao that, in the event of a Mao-Lin showdown, the great majority of Lin's proteges would side with Mao rather than with Lin. If so, this calculation was to prove correct, in the summer of 1971.

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In any case, Mao's concern about "bases" -- whether political or military -- that might be used against him was to be reflected in the 1 July joint editorial on the 50th anniversary of the Party's founding. The editorial inter alia denounced early leaders of the Party who in their "organizational line...practiced sectarianism and deprived Chairman Mao of his power," foresaw a "protracted struggle" to consolidate the "dictatorship of the proletariat politically, ideologically,... and organizationally," and emphasized the need to "uphold democratic centralism" -- that is, to recognize the supreme authority of the Party center, to be obedient to higher levels, as opposed to the concept of "many centers, i.e. no center." This editorial reaffirmed Mao's precept that "the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party."\*

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*\*The issue was pretty clearly not the existence of so many military leaders in key positions, as they continued to be assigned to them after the time that Mao had decided*  
(footnote continued on page 35)

"Debates" on Foreign Policy: The media's highly favorable treatment of Lin Piao -- giving him the beginnings of a "personality cult" -- continued through spring 1971. Lin arrived and departed with Mao on the occasion of May Day, looking terrible (huddled in a greatcoat, while other Party leaders wore no coats), but otherwise giving every appearance of being, as billed, Mao's closest comrade and successor. At least through May, Chou En-lai was presenting himself as acting in general on the "instructions" of Lin as well as Mao.

By the end of May, however, Chinese Communist leaders had almost certainly had some of the "debates" about foreign policy which Peking's spokesmen (including Chou En-lai) subsequently admitted having had -- in particular, about the new stance toward the United States, as the time was rapidly approaching to make the actual arrangements for President Nixon's visit.\* It was suggested above

*(footnote continued from page 34)*  
to purge Lin and even after he had begun his talks with military-political leaders outside Peking in which he made his intentions clear. When the final four provincial-level Party committees were announced in August 1971, the military's visibility was at its height. Of the 29 such committees; 20 of the first secretaries were career military men (12 commanders, eight political officers), all of whom apparently retained their military posts; only seven were old Party cadres, two were men with police backgrounds, and none was a representative of a mass organization. In most of the provincial committees headed by old Party cadres, the next two ranking secretaries were career military men.

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that Lin and his proteges may have been among those who, in 1969, had been unable to make the shift that fixed the USSR as China's main enemy, and that Mao may have seen this. If so, their position had perhaps looked better for a time in spring 1970, when the US incursion into Cambodia provoked Mao to a thunderous denunciation (20 May) restoring the United States to its long-standing position as the main enemy. But, as previously noted, by late 1970 the USSR had again been fixed as the main enemy, and Mao and Chou, in telling Edgar Snow about their intention to explore the possibilities for an improvement in relations with the United States at the government-to-government level, did not associate Lin with this initiative.

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The 1 July 1971 joint editorial previously cited  
made clear that Mao and Chou still felt it necessary to

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defend their new line with their biggest gun, as if the "debate" had persisted to the time of writing and was about to be declared at an end. It was emphasized that Mao himself stood behind the new line toward the United States. Whereas Liu Shao-chi's line had been "capitulationist," Mao's policy of negotiations (the argument went) was very different. As Mao had long ago said,

*How to give 'tit for tat' depends on the situation... If they wanted to negotiate, sometimes not going to negotiations was tit for tat, and sometimes going to negotiations was also tit for tat.*

The editorial reminded its readers that Mao "went to Chungking [in 1945] in person for negotiations" -- which, admittedly, had failed, but had "exposed" the enemy for all to see. It was evident that Mao and Chou in 1971 had high hopes for something more than "exposing" the enemy: they saw a good chance for positive gains, and were angry with those who were unwilling to make the shift and/or to accept the small degree of risk. This editorial went on to denounce "hidden traitors who have illicit relations with foreign countries," another matter entirely.

On the assumption that the Party is telling the truth in its charge that Lin opposed the Mao-Chou line, it is not hard to believe that some of his close proteges supported him in Party meetings. For them as for Lin, there were obvious grounds to stand on -- either of basic affinities with the USSR, so that Moscow by definition could not be the main enemy, or of prudence in the face of the Soviet threat, so that the dangerous Russians should be placated, rather than antagonized by conciliatory gestures toward the distant and -- on the record of recent years -- less dangerous United States.

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Some Possible Moves Against Lin: Lin Piao made what was to prove his last public appearance on 3 June. On 7 June, Hsu Shih-yu, commander of the Nanking Military Region, made what was to be his last public appearance for almost eight months. The reasons for Hsu's disappearance were most uncertain. He had appeared to be a favorite of both Mao and Lin Piao (himself still in Mao's apparent favor), and in a very strong position.\*

*\*Hsu had begun his association with Lin in the 1930s, and stayed with him through World War II. From the mid-40s, he was a leading figure in the East China area, no longer connected with Lin. However, when Lin became Minister of Defense in 1959, he appointed Hsu as one of his deputies, with Hsu remaining in the Nanking MR. Hsu was one of the few military leaders to whom Lin confided his plans for purging the PLA in 1966. Hsu thus appeared to qualify as a protege of Lin's, if not as close a protege as some of the military leaders in Peking and Canton. Mao entered Hsu's life in a critical way in early 1967, when Hsu was under attack by mass organizations and ambitious military subordinates in his MR: Mao took Hsu with him to Shanghai, and then to Peking for several months, while the threat to Hsu was being dealt with. Again in 1968 Hsu was defended against attack, this time by Kang Sheng speaking expressly in Mao's name.*

The reasons are still uncertain. If Mao were fully confident of Hsu, and had information to the effect that Lin's group was plotting against him in East China, it might seem reasonable to keep Hsu in Nanking. Thus Hsu may have been brought to Peking under suspicion, for examination and evaluation, and held there for many months before being returned to Nanking early in 1972 with all of his military and political titles and apparently in high favor. But it is also possible that Hsu was the first of the military-political leaders outside Peking to be consulted by Mao on his plans for purging Lin and others, and that Hsu was brought to Peking to assume a key military position in Peking itself -- e.g. acting commander of the Peking MR -- in this time of troubles, and in anticipation of a period of crisis. Hsu's principal deputy in the Nanking MR was brought to Peking at about the same time as a deputy C/S, and other proteges of Hsu were soon named to other key posts in Peking and in some of the MR headquarters.\*

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*\*Mao's arrangements for assuring the reliability of the Peking MR can only be conjectured. After the purge of the MR commander and first political officer in late 1970, Peking simply refused to identify those acting in those capacities. Li Te-sheng, the protege of Hsu Shih-yu who appeared in August 1970 as Director of the General Political Department, was much later reported to be acting as the Peking MR commander concurrently; he may have assumed the post in summer 1970. Chi Teng-kuei, a young Party leader in Honan and an apparent protege of Mao himself, who (like Li) had been named an alternate member of the Politburo in 1969, was apparently brought to Peking in 1970 and was later reported to be the first political officer of the Peking MR; if so, he too may have assumed this post as early as summer 1970.*

Another important step that might have been taken at about the same time was the strengthening, for Mao's purposes, of the Peking Garrison. While the Garrison had been reorganized in 1970, its commander and first political officer had not been identified. Wu Chung, not a protege of any member of Lin's group, is known to have been the Garrison commander by September 1971, and had apparently held this post for some months before September. Similarly, Wu Te, an old Party cadre with a police background who was acting head of the Party's Peking committee in the absence of the disabled Hsieh Fu-chih, was making appearances suggesting that he was concurrently the first political officer of the Peking Garrison (a pattern also observed in Shanghai, where Mao's man Chang Chun-chiao had held both posts for some time).

Two visible developments in early July suggested the possibility that Mao was preparing the Party for some change in Lin Piao's status. The 1 July joint editorial cited above did praise Lin by name as both a compiler and an exegete of Mao's thought, specifying under the latter heading Lin's report to the Ninth Party Congress in spring 1969. The editorial also called for Party rebuilding to continue under Lin as "deputy leader" as well as Mao as leader. It did not, however, discuss the matters taken up in Lin's report, and it did not specify any recent contributions made by Lin, and thus carried at least a faint implication -- noted by some observers at the time -- that Lin's current role was less important than his past roles.\*

Moreover, during Dr. Kissinger's visit to Peking in the second week of July (9-11 July), the old Marshal Yeh Chien-ying met the U.S. delegation and was the Chinese military representative (there was no American opposite

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\*In retrospect, one passage takes broad aim at Lin's group: "It is essential thoroughly to expose the... conspirators, careerists, renegades and enemy agents... and the hidden traitors who have illicit relations with foreign countries..."



number) throughout the talks between Dr. Kissinger and Chou En-lai. Despite his lack of a government post (which Lin did have, as Minister of Defense), Yeh acted as the chief of the delegation when Chou was otherwise engaged, and the Chinese in conversation emphasized the overall importance of Yeh. Yeh's role in the talks could reasonably be interpreted in terms of his far greater experience (than Lin) in dealing with Americans and in terms of Lin's illness (he was soon reported ill again).<sup>\*</sup> But Mao may have been thinking ahead, to the time when Yeh would surface as his principal military aide, a role which Yeh was to assume fully in September. The civilian Party leaders apparently feared that Yeh's eminence would be taken by the Chinese audience as meaning a concomitant and radical decline in Lin's status, because Peking did not reveal to that audience Yeh's role in the talks. There had indeed been such a decline in Lin's status, but Mao and his lieutenants still in favor -- e.g., Chou, Yeh -- did not want that to be generally known until they had made the necessary arrangements to deal with its consequences.

Some of these arrangements -- those that could be made in Peking -- have been discussed above. Others had to be made outside Peking. Among the most important of these were talks with MR leaders, other than whatever talks with leaders of the Peking MR and Nanking MR that Mao had had before July.

<sup>\*</sup>Lin's wife, Yeh Chun, made her last public appearance on 11 July, not in connection with Dr. Kissinger's visit (which was of course not publicized at all at the time).

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There may conceivably have been a prolonged meeting of the MAC -- in Mao's absence -- in late July. Almost every important military leader in Peking was out of sight in the last week of July, and most were missing for the last two weeks. It is further conceivable that such a meeting -- in the absence also of Lin Piao, who was reported seriously ill in early August -- acted to replace Lin with Yeh Chien-ying as the de facto leader of the MAC. All this seems doubtful, however, as no MAC meeting at this time has been reported in the voluminous Party briefings, and these briefings indicate that Mao was not yet prepared to move decisively against Lin -- that is, that he was still engaged in talks with military-political leaders outside Peking as late as early September.

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IV. The Crisis, August - September 1971

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Mao's Talks with Regional Leaders: The decline in Lin Piao's status -- which seemed at the time well short of disgrace -- was reflected on Army Day, 1 August. With Lin himself missing since 3 June and his wife since 11 July, the joint editorial for Army Day for the first time in years included no quotation from Lin, and his wife failed

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to represent him at the Army Day reception.\* Officially, Lin was "too sick" to make appearances, and he may really have been sick, even incapacitated, as was later reported. This may help to explain Mao's apparent unconcern about what Lin might be doing, in the way of carrying out a coup or making preparations for one, in Mao's absence. The Party's story, however, is that Lin was well enough at least to attempt to activate an assassination plan and to make contingent preparations to flee.

As previously suggested, Mao by the end of June may have taken further steps to place the Peking Garrison and the Peking MR under the command of officers loyal to himself and had talked with at least some of the leaders of the Nanking MR, may have talked with other regional leaders in July or early August, and may have stopped at the Wuhan MR headquarters in Central China on his way south in August, although such talks cannot be documented. In any case, Party briefings -- so widely disseminated that refugees and travellers have supplied details of them to the non-Communist press -- place Mao at a point in the South China area (probably Changsha) in or about mid-August (when Mao and the regional leaders concerned were alike out of sight).

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*\*This editorial called for the Party's "absolute" leadership of the PLA and for the PLA's direct "responsibility" to the "leading organs of the Party" -- pretty clearly meaning something more than the Lin-dominated MAC.*



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The Aborted "Assassination" and "Coups": The Party's official story asserts that Lin's group -- in this brief remaining period of Lin's freedom -- attempted in early September to activate a plan to assassinate Mao, an assassination which was to be followed by a "coup" or military

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takeover.\* However, the briefings vary considerably on the matter of the assassination plans: the means to be employed, the parties involved, the places, the dates, the number of times that the plotters attempted to activate their plans (one, three or five), and the means by which these plans were frustrated (by a repentant conspirator, or the hired assassin himself, or Lin's daughter, or whatever). The most common version is that Lin and his proteges did commission at least one attempt on Mao in Shanghai or some other point in East China in early September, and were frustrated by some combination of poor planning, faulty execution, and bad luck.\*\* Almost

*\*Lin Piao himself had spoken at great length (when he was in favor) of the danger of a "coup," perhaps involving assassinations. A possible attempt on Hsieh Fu-chih in March 1970 has been noted. Later in 1970, Chen Po-ta was charged with plotting the assassination of Madame Mao. Li Tien-yu, whose death after illness was announced in September 1970, may have been assassinated. In December 1970, the sudden death of Tan Fu-jen, the top-ranking Party leader in Yunnan, was reported to be an assassination (which the local press appeared to confirm).*

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all accounts agree that the attempt was aborted -- that is, no bullet was fired, no bomb set off. Lin's group simply tried to arrange for this to be done, and were unable to get it carried through.

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The alleged attempt to activate the plan is consistent with other parts of the story.

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There are three difficulties in accepting the Party's story of an attempt to carry out an assassination plan. One is that the Party has seemed to tell too many different stories about it, as if trying and discarding various versions until it found one that was credible. For another, one would suppose that the commissioners of an assassination would attempt to conceal their identification with it, whereas all versions of the alleged attempt trace it easily to Lin's group, even to documents written by Lin's group. For another, it is hard to understand why a Chairman Mao who had discovered, prior to 12 September -- as most accounts of Party briefings have it -- that Lin and others had already attempted to have him killed, would have allowed Lin to remain free and his Trident to remain available to him, and would not have ordered the seizure of



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others in Peking. It would seem that nothing more than a telephone call would have been needed to immobilize both Lin and the plane at Peitaiho, whereas the air stand-down apparently did not begin until the morning hours of 13 September, after the flight from Peitaiho.\* And Lin's proteges in Peking were not immediately arrested. Moreover, the flight itself apparently came as a shock to Mao, as it should not have been if those with access to the plane were failed assassins.

None of these difficulties seems insurmountable. There may be a single official version, garbled by its many voices and audiences. The commissioners of the assassination may indeed have tried to conceal their connection with the plan, but were betrayed by a single one of their group or its agents (as several accounts say). Mao may have felt that Lin was impotent in Peitaiho, may have ordered the air standdown earlier than the time it became apparent (and Lin evaded it, as some accounts suggest), and may have felt that Lin's proteges in Peking were already neutralized by his own men.

As previously suggested, the existence of an assassination plan -- a plan to kill Mao if necessary -- is entirely credible. But the question of whether the conspirators tried to activate their plan while Mao was in Shanghai in early September has to remain open.

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*\*It is conceivable that Mao deliberately permitted Lin to flee, in order to make the overall case against him more credible. This is very doubtful, however, in view of Lin's potential value to the USSR, if only as a source of information on Chinese affairs (cf. the Party's charge that Lin on his flight was bearing China's national defense plans and other sensitive materials).*

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Additional information on Lin's plans may have come to Mao from a variety of sources: from the regional leaders with whom Mao had been talking, in particular from Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan in Shanghai (both Politburo members who shuttled between Peking and Shanghai), from Chou En-lai or Yeh Chien-ying or Madame Mao in Peking, or even from Lin's daughter (as some accounts assert, although it is hard to believe that Lin would have taken his daughter, who could play no useful role, into his confidence; and most versions assert more credibly that Lin's daughter informed other Party leaders only of Lin's plans to flee).

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Ironically, on [redacted] 11 September, People's Daily was prominently advertising the forthcoming publication of "50 historic photographs" of Mao and Lin -- mostly of Mao, but several of Lin -- as if Lin were still in the highest favor. While it is possible that one of Lin's supporters in Peking was responsible for this initiative, the supervisor if not director of propaganda was Mao's man Mao Wen-yuan, and it seems more likely that this advertisement was a part of the deception campaign which was soon to become systematic.

Mao's Return to Peking: Accounts agree that Mao returned to Peking, probably by car or train, on 12 September, at least a day earlier than originally planned. Mao is said to have arrived in Peking at about 1600. A Party meeting -- perhaps largely of military leaders -- was convened that same evening, either by Mao or by Chou En-lai acting in Mao's name. There is independent confirmation, by foreign observers in Peking, of such a meeting at that time.

Mao's hand was forced, to a degree, by the forthcoming meeting of the National People's Congress, scheduled to open on 20 September. He had decided -- on whatever grounds -- to purge Lin and his proteges, so he could not allow the NPC to reconfirm Lin as his successor or to fill either of the key government posts -- Chairman of the NPC or Premier -- with one of Lin's men. But Mao had a week to take care of this, and the 12 September meeting held immediately on his return has to be explained on other grounds.

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The urgency of the Party meeting of 12 September can be explained either in terms of Mao's belief that he had narrowly escaped assassination or of his belief that Lin was planning a coup against him (probably entailing assassination).

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In connection with this Party meeting, it seems virtually certain that Mao ordered into action, to protect himself and other Party leaders, that unit of the Peking Garrison charged with the physical protection of Central Committee members, and that he cut Lin's military proteges in Peking off from command of their forces, taking direct command as Chairman of the MAC and sending his orders through Chou En-lai and Yeh Chien-ying.

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Mao's intention to purge Lin and others, together with his reasons for doing so, was almost certainly made clear -- whether by himself or by Chou -- at this meeting. His intention to prolong the meeting in order to determine the extent of Lin's support was probably made clear also.

Lin's Flight and Death: Most accounts suggest that Lin, who had known since early September that Mao regarded Lin as plotting against him and that Mao planned to purge him, had made his own plans to flee if necessary. In most accounts [redacted] which include allegations of attempts to arrange Mao's assassination, Lin's plans were contingent on the fortunes of his plans to kill Mao. These accounts suggest that Lin, knowing sometime before 12 September that his "coup" had already failed and knowing that his implication in recent moves against Mao was known to Mao or fearing that it would become known, activated his escape plan, fixing his flight

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for 0700 on 13 September -- prior to the time at which Mao was originally scheduled to return. Several accounts agree that Mao's return to Peking earlier than expected -- whether as the survivor of an assassination plan or as the Party's leader intending to purge Lin for other reasons -- caused Lin to hastily revise his plan, updating the flight for the night of 12-13 September. Such a revision may have been speeded as well by information reaching Lin about the Party meeting and related events on 12 September.\* It does seem that the flight of the Trident on the night of 12-13 September was hastily organized and poorly prepared.

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It cannot be proved that Lin Piao and his wife and son were among the nine persons killed in the Trident which crashed and burned at about 0300 on 13 September near Khentai in Outer Mongolia, close to the Soviet border and on a line with the big air complex at Irkutsk (the apparent destination).

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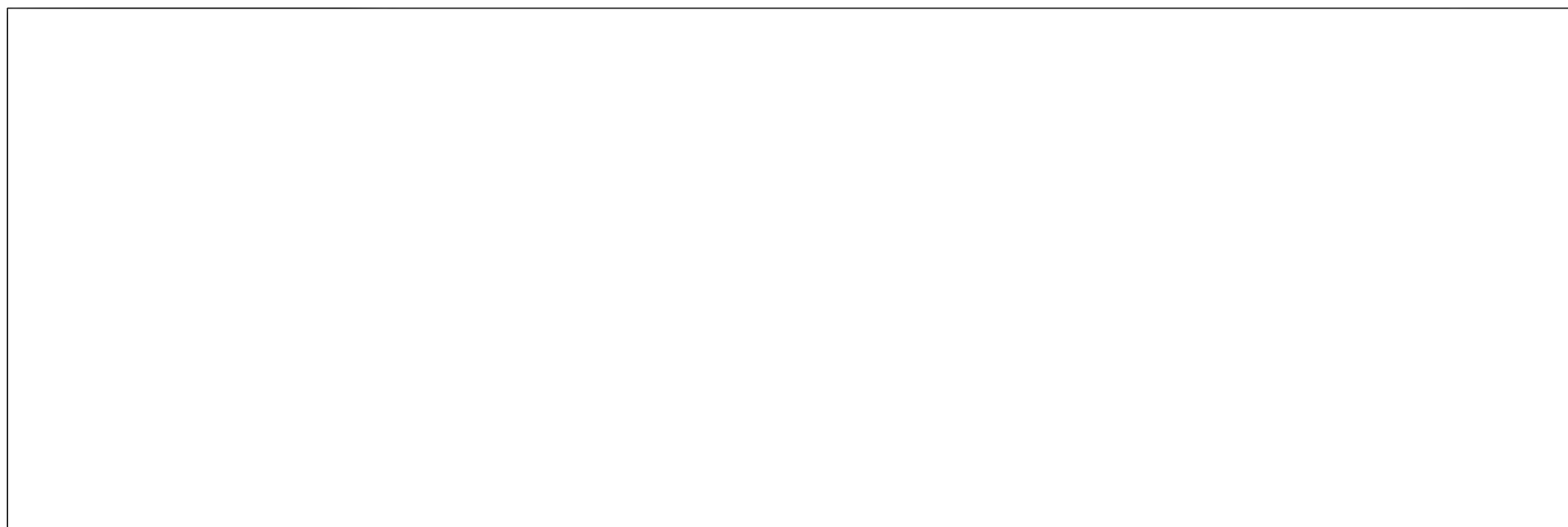
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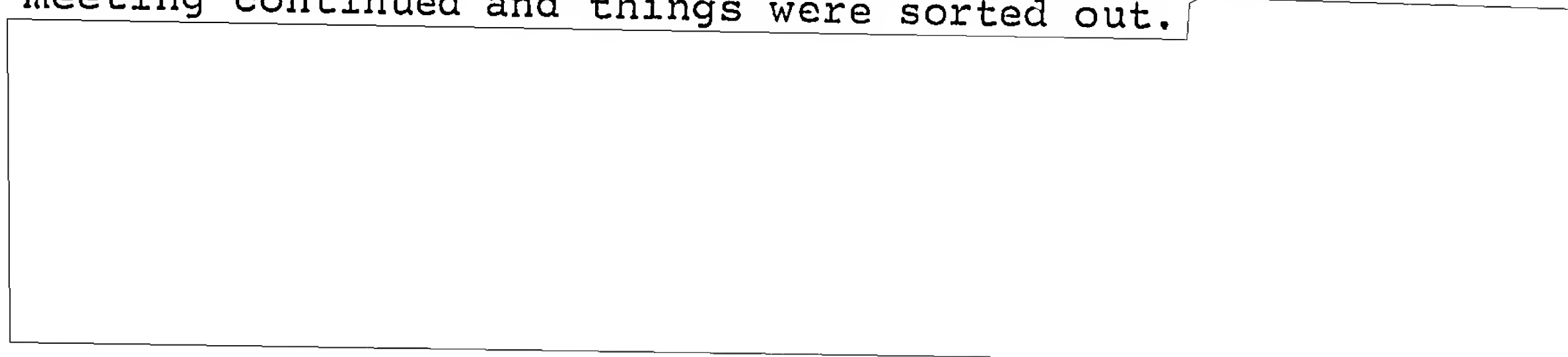
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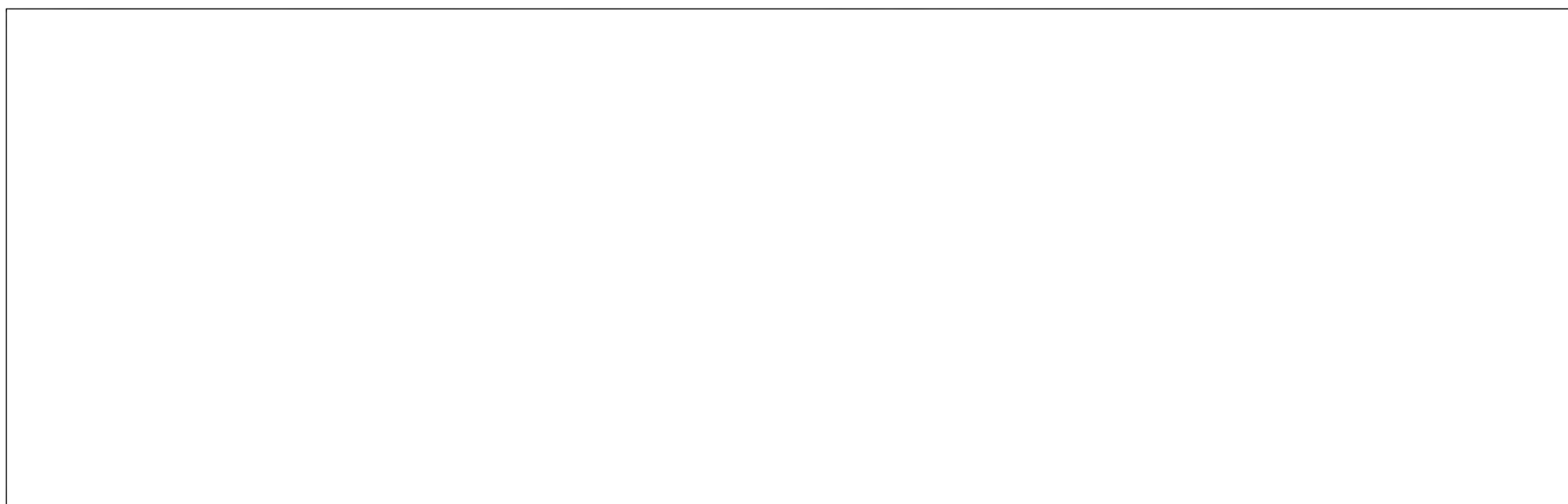
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The Disposition of Lin's Proteges: An almost-complete air standdown was apparently imposed in the early hours of 13 September -- surely on Mao's order -- in order to prevent any further such flights and to keep all remaining military leaders in place while the Party meeting continued and things were sorted out.

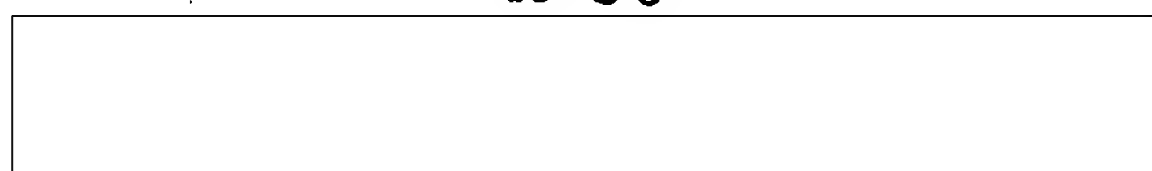
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The Party meeting which had been convened on 12 September continued intensively. No Party leaders, whether military or civilian, made any appearance at all in the period 13-15 September. And the meeting remained in session until the fate of Lin's principal proteges had been decided. There is no evidence that the regional military leaders as a group attended this meeting; and indeed there is evidence -- the absence of flights -- that most of them did not attend, although some of the principal leaders of the Peking and Nanking MRs were already in Peking.

Mao apparently adhered to the Chen Po-ta format in dealing with Huang, Wu, and Li -- and with a fourth Lin protege, Chiu Hui-tso, who remained free until 24 September. That is, Mao allowed a mountain of charges to accumulate against them, building the case deliberately.

After the first four days of this meeting, Party leaders began to come back into view.

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On 19 September, the regime postponed the NPC (scheduled to open the next day), and at the same time cancelled the plans (if ever genuine) for a traditional National Day celebration. By 20 September, Chou En-lai, Madame Mao and others were giving banquets again, and the Madame -- who had seemed to have an adversary relationship with most if not all of the purged military leaders -- was observed to be in unusually high spirits. The four above-named proteges of Lin were all officially charged and removed from their posts

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[redacted] on 24 or 25 September, dates consistent with the citations of Huang at the regional level as a person still nominally in authority as late as 23-24 September, with Chiu's last public appearance on 24 September, and with Party briefings to the effect that the conspirators had been rolled up by 25 September. Although the Party insists that these four -- Huang, Wu, Li, Chiu -- were implicated in Lin's plan to kill Mao (as well as the overall planning for a "coup"), there have been no reports of their execution.\*

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Yeh Chien-ying, the senior active vice-chairman of the MAC, was reportedly named on 25 September to direct the MAC (still under Mao's chairmanship) and to act as Minister of National Defense, replacing Lin Piao in both roles. The crisis was over.

The Roles of Others: As previously noted, some observers believe that Mao did not take the initiative in the destruction of Lin and the purge of Lin's proteges in September, and that this course was forced upon Mao by other leaders. But all accounts of the crisis [redacted] give Mao the central role, from the start, in purging the military leaders, and it is believed that this billing can be accepted.

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However, these same official accounts do give credit to other leaders in assisting Mao in the crisis. The best of them give credit in particular to Chou En-lai

*\*If they are not eventually executed, after the Party has wrung the last drop of information from them, it would seem that the Party does not fully believe its own story -- in other words, does not believe that they were among those planning to kill Mao. It seems most improbable that even Mao would think to "rehabilitate" an assassin.*

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and Yeh Chien-ying -- a version of events which tends to be confirmed by Chou's dislodgement of Lin as the second-ranking Party leader and by Yeh's rise to fourth place (behind Madame Mao, and replacing Huang) in the hierarchy publicized after the purge. Chou's great prestige and popularity and his and Yeh's good relations with most of China's military leaders must have proved very useful to Mao throughout the course of the Party meeting of 12-25 September and in preventing any important challenge to the purge from developing either in Peking or outside it.

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There is the additional question of whether any of those leaders -- or others -- contributed to the purge of the military leaders by feeding Mao false or slanted information on their activities before Mao set out on his summer tour or during the tour -- especially in Shanghai, his last stop before returning to carry out the purge.

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It is not hard to believe that some Party leaders close to Mao -- e.g. Madame Mao, in effect a rival for Mao's affections -- would have done what they could to encourage Mao's suspicions of Lin. The record also indicates that Chou En-lai, the most influential of Mao's lieutenants since 1969, was in conflict with Lin in some respects since 1966 and in particular with regard to foreign policy. Similar cases could be made for other Party leaders. The record suggests, however, that Mao did not need any help in changing his mind about Lin: that Lin compromised himself before 1970 on at least the matter of the PLA's (and his own) responsiveness and probably on other matters, that he damaged himself seriously in 1970 by challenging Mao on the issue of the chairmanship of the regime, and

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that he was marked for purging even prior to his opposition to the Mao-Chou foreign policy and various other misconduct, whether or not one accepts the Party's story about Lin's plans for a "coup".

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V. The Post-Lin Line and Leadership

The handling of the intensely embarrassing case of Lin Piao and his proteges, for both domestic and foreign audiences, has been a hard problem for Party leaders. The Party at first attempted to conceal the fall of Lin's group. Party briefings on the case did not begin until October. Public commentaries on the case have been in terms of "swindlers like Liu Shao-chi," emphasizing conspiracy and illicit organizational activity, but more recently blaming Lin's group for specific policies.

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The PLA is being returned to a more nearly traditional role, and is being told that an obedient and humble PLA need not fear a large-scale purge. A fairly substantial purge of the PLA has already been carried out, but thus far on a smaller scale than might have been expected. Mao seems to remain the dominant figure, but is heavily dependent on Chou En-lai, whose status and authority have been greatly enhanced. Mao and Chou are operating with a relatively small central team, composed largely of their own proteges.

The Public Line: Lin Piao was a "deputy leader" in People's Daily as late as 16 September -- three days after his death -- and appeared in a provincial broadcast on 8 October. Neither Lin nor any member of his group has been mentioned by the media since then. Chinese officials have not admitted that Lin is dead (merely "politically eliminated"), and there has been only a very selective media discussion of his crimes

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(e.g. no mention or even implication that he is charged inter alia with planning the assassination of Chairman Mao). Just as in the case of Liu Shao-chi, who for a prolonged period after his fall was not denounced by name, Lin's group is discussed in terms of "swindlers like Liu Shao-chi."

The commentaries have of course emphasized the principle of Party leadership, as opposed to plotting, double-dealing, splitting, and so on. The favorite quotation is Mao's "Practice Marxism, and not revisionism; unite, and don't split; be open and above-board, and don't intrigue and conspire." Many commentaries have denounced those who "put sectarianism into action organizationally, ... establish their own mountain strongholds, ... form their own groups of diehard followers," and so on.

Recently, the media have been attributing to Lin's group -- by strong implication -- a range of repudiated political, economic and military policies. These policies have been both to the Left and to the Right of Mao the moving Center, and in general it is not possible on present evidence to identify Lin's group -- as distinct from Mao and other leaders -- with them.

While Peking has been insisting on the principle of the Party's "absolute leadership" and upon the need for a center and for obedience to that center (inter alia denouncing the purged military leaders for their alleged principle of "many centers"), there has continued to be public and private talk about "collective leadership" within Party organs at all levels. This is applicable to all Party cadres, but seems aimed in particular at military administrators, high-handed ("arrogant") in the past.

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A-62

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Mao remains above the Party, "collective" leadership begins below his level. But where the Party begins, "collective" leadership is supposed to begin, and many articles and broadcasts have spelled out its operation at lower levels.

Within Party committees, the importance of the first secretary is to be reduced. (This is to be true of PLA Party committees as well.) The importance of civilian cadres vis-a-vis the military is to be enhanced, just as local Party committees are to have more authority vis-a-vis military Party committees. The majority's will is to be respected. And so on.

All this is to be "voluntary." The first secretary is voluntarily to reduce his authority. If he is a military man, he is voluntarily to give larger roles to the civilians. And while he must if necessary promote "correct minority views" (those in accord with national policies), he must not force them on the other Committee members.\* The thought appears to be: everyone will "voluntarily" comply with the Party center's orders, because he knows that he will be purged if he does not.

Party Briefings: Party cadres were told in September, and in some places well into October, that Lin and

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*\*He has no guidance as to how to proceed if the incorrect majority refuses to accept the "correct" position. He is trapped between the two imperatives of obedience to the center and submission to majority will.*

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other missing military leaders were urgently engaged in "war preparations" against the Soviet threat. Official briefings apparently began at the provincial level in early October. In some of them, Peking apologized for having misinformed its own cadres in earlier briefings, in effect admitting that it had not known how to handle the case.\*

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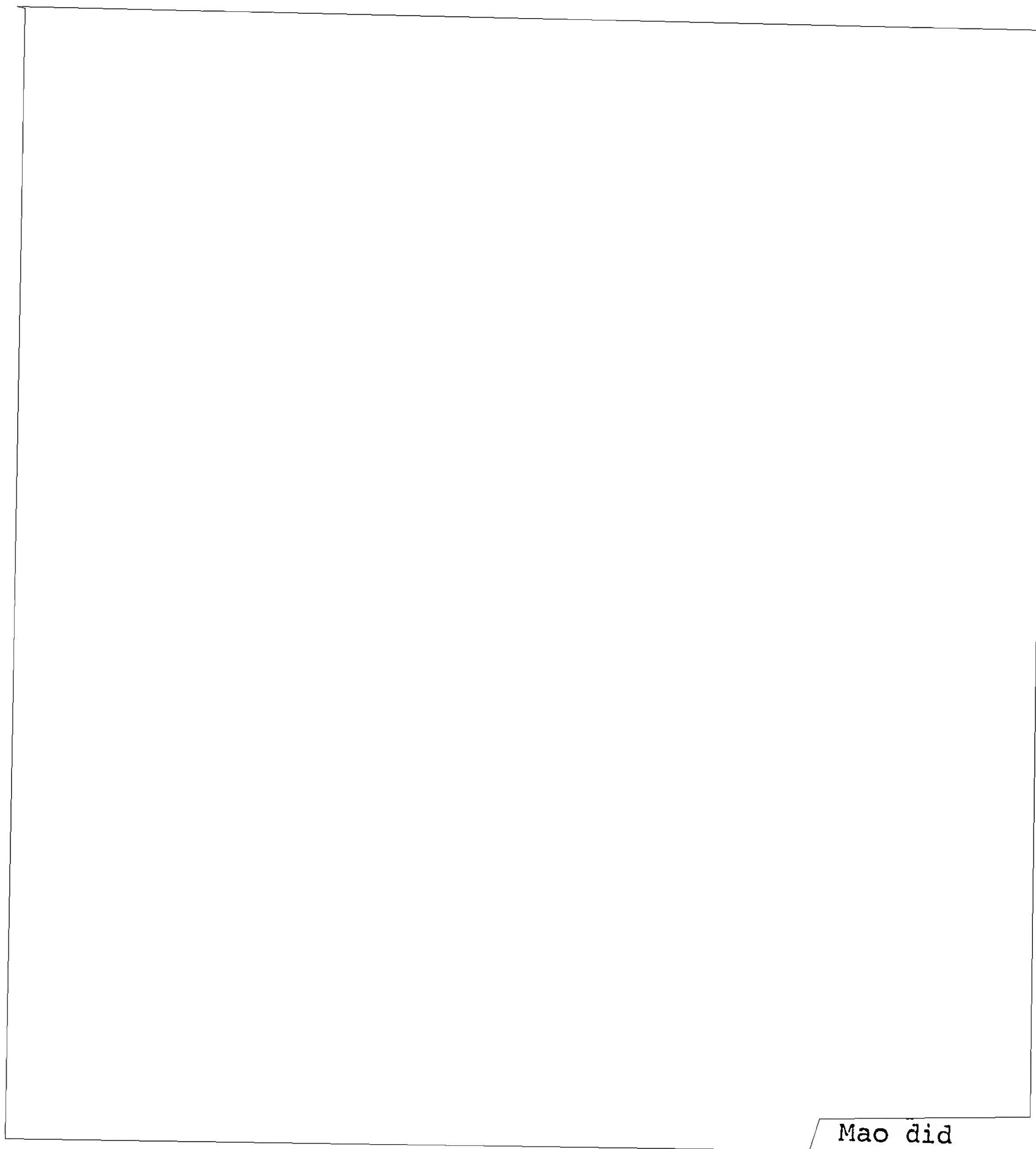
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Mao did

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indeed undermine the status and confidence of Party cadres for years to come, he did indeed incite the Red Guards and then turn on them, and he did indeed take steps to reduce the prestige and authority of the PLA after the 1970 plenum. His policy has indeed been to keep the Chinese people poor and virtuous, exploiting them to the utmost to build the state. And his "revolutionary" diplomacy during the Cultural Revolution did indeed isolate and damage Peking. These are all charges that have been made against Mao before, charges which Chinese leaders and intellectuals have been purged for making, and which important elements of Chinese society probably -- as reported -- continue to believe.

The effect of the Party's circulation of this document -- excerpts from which are appearing in the public media -- is to associate Lin with a number of popular grievances, as Party leaders are surely aware.

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While there are probably still some active leaders of the CCP who are happy to see this case made against Mao (and Chou is conceivably among them), the evidence is good that Mao himself took the initiative in circulating the document, on the rationale of "learning from negative examples."

This is a practice peculiar to Mao, among Communist leaders. He did it in 1956-57, in the "hundred flowers" venture, when Chinese intellectuals criticized his "personality cult" and his persecution of them. He did it again in 1959, circulating criticisms of his "leap forward" venture made by the purged Defense Minister Peng Te-huai. He did it again in 1963, when Khrushchev's attacks on his policies were published in People's Daily and Red Flag. It is a form of ad hominem argument: the men making the criticisms are evil men, therefore the criticisms are invalid, and are discredited with the evil men. In the present case, criticism of Mao is attributed to the worst



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of all Chinese "traitors," the only one of them charged to this time with having led a group of Party leaders which planned to kill the demigod Chairman Mao.\* [redacted]

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Party media have recently denounced positions attributed to Lin's group [redacted] One recent broadcast, for example, denounces those who will not persist in "class struggle," who have "maliciously slandered the dictatorship of the proletariat as 'dictatorship' and 'tyranny,'" who want to "liberate all reactionaries," who envisage a "fascist dictatorship," who are "peddling so-called 'genuine socialism,'" who want to "surrender to social-imperialism" (the USSR), who argue that "when the people are rich, the country will be strong," and so on. 25X1

There is a question as to whether all this will truly strengthen Mao's position. The case against him, [redacted] is a good one. While no mainland Chinese in his right mind could be expected to say publicly that he agrees with the case, private agreement seems likely to be reinforced by the consideration that Mao's own chosen successor took this view of him. Certain discredited leaders like Liu Shao-chi, and other active leaders such as Chou En-lai, would seem bound to look better by comparison. 25X1

*\*The charges against Chen Po-ta fall short of this: that Chen supported the "5/16" Group [redacted]*

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The Purge Since September: The PLA has been told repeatedly that it is to be subordinated to the civilian Party leadership, that opposition to Party policies (including foreign policy) will not be tolerated, that Party policies must be faithfully implemented, that the PLA must learn humility, and that the authority of military administrators vis-a-vis civilian Party cadres is in general to be reduced -- in other words, that the PLA is to be returned to a more nearly traditional role. It seems likely that the chastened PLA -- that is, the great majority of PLA leaders and officers -- will accept this, because the PLA has been told too that an obedient and humble PLA need not fear another large-scale purge, on the order of 1966-67.

Actually, a fairly substantial purge of the PLA has already been carried out, particularly if those who dropped out of sight in or just after the early months of 1971 are included. However, some of those purged have presumably been charged with "arrogance and complacency" and other offenses, not directly related to the purge of Lin's group. Moreover, the purge since the time of the purge of Lin's group in September has apparently been on a scale smaller than might have been expected -- somewhere between the small number implied by the Party and the large number that would have fallen if all of the proteges and Lin and those purged with him had been included.

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There has apparently been no general exodus of PLA figures from the central government machinery. Almost all of the PLA veterans known or believed to head commissions and ministries have made appearances since the purge, and several of them have been identified in these posts. Indeed, the one new Minister surfaced since the purge is a PLA man.\* The one visible difference, since the purge, is that PLA officers in government posts have tactfully ceased to wear their PLA uniforms. It is possible that -- apart from the officers of the Ministry of National Defense -- these veteran PLA officers no longer have any PLA connection, as there are no military ranks to be retained. They may simply be ex-PLA men, and may be reliably responsive to Chou En-lai and his lieutenants for the same reasons that induced Chou to appoint them in the first place. With rare exceptions (e.g. Pai Hsiang-kuo, who remains active), these PLA figures in government posts have not been regarded as proteges of Lin and other purged leaders, but rather as reliable men with proven managerial skills.

For more than five years the 11 Military Region (MR) headquarters have been the only regional authorities in China. Apart from the concentration of Lin Piao's proteges in concurrent posts in the MAC standing committee

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*\*One PLA leader who had been serving as a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs has recently been reassigned as an ambassador, but another has replaced him.*

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and MAC administrative unit and General Staff prior to the purge, the most striking concentration of Lin or Lin/Huang proteges was found in these headquarters, with ten of the 11 under such commands at the time of the purge. As noted earlier, these men were in general not identified with Lin as closely -- not given the same degree of preferment during the Cultural Revolution -- as were the central leaders purged with him, but they were close enough to have their own status brought into question with Lin's fall. If the principal/protege relationship were the main criterion for rendering judgments on other military leaders after the purge, most of the top-level leaders in the MR headquarters could be expected to fall.

There were and are, however, two strong factors favoring most of the MR leaders, at least for the time being. One is that some are known -- and others presumed -- to have assured Mao of their support before his purge of the central leaders. Another is that a large-scale purge of the MR leaders -- on whom the central leaders still depend for the effective government of China outside Peking -- is unlikely while the central military leadership is still being reorganized.

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It may be that several of the MR leaders now in place and apparently in favor will be removed in the course of the next year or two, when the leaders in Peking feel secure enough to take action against certain of them left in place for the time being in the interest of stability after this first round of examination of them. But it looks as though most of them -- including many of the Lin/Huang proteges who occupied more than half of the top 44 positions in the MR headquarters at the time of Lin's and Huang's fall -- are going to survive.

It has been surmised that one consequence of the purge of the central military leaders may be to put an end to the system of military-political leadership in which an MR commander or first political officer is concurrently the first secretary of the provincial Party committee in which his MR headquarters is located. Developments since the purge suggest that this may have been under

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consideration -- with each case examined, and decided on its merits -- but will not be general. Of the ten MR commanders who have held these top military and top political positions in their areas concurrently, three have now been expressly identified in both posts since the purge. These are Hsu Shih-yu in Nanking, the late Chang Kuo-hua in Chengtu, and most recently Chen Hsi-lien in Shenyang.\* In the other seven cases in which such dual identifications could have been made when the leader appeared, the media have been evasive.

As has been seen, the provincial leadership has a mixed military-political character. Of the 29 provincial-level Party committees (26 provinces, three major municipalities), ten are or at least have been headed by MR leaders, and in every one of the other (29) cases the first secretary of the Party committee is known or believed to be the provincial MD or municipal garrison commander or first political officer, usually the latter. In those 19 committees not headed by MR leaders, the Party committee post is generally more important than the corresponding military post.

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Of the 29 provincial-level first secretaries or acting first secretaries, only two -- Wang Chia-tao in

*\*There is the possibly irrelevant fact that at least two of those three MR leaders -- Hsu and Chang -- had been shown special favor by Mao himself in the past. Another Mao favorite, Li Ta-chang, may move up to replace Chang as first political officer in Szechuan.*

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Heilungkiang and Lan I-nung in Kweichow, both PLA men -- have failed to make appearances, in apparent favor, since September.\* This figure is to a degree misleading, as others have been missing more recently: the examination of the provincial committees has certainly not been completed. But the general picture for the provincial first secretaries looks to be at least as good as for the MR leaders: most of them -- probably a large majority -- will survive.

The provincial-level military leadership (including the three major municipal garrisons) overlaps even more considerably with the provincial Party committee leadership than suggested above. In those cases in which the MD or Garrison commander or first political officer is the first secretary, the other is usually one of the subordinate secretaries. And in almost all provincial committees there is at least one additional military man, sometimes several.

Relatively few -- not more than a dozen -- of the provincial-level commanders and first political officers of provincial MD's and major municipal garrisons have been regarded as proteges of Lin and Huang, who (outside Peking) preferred to concentrate their proteges in the far more powerful MR headquarters. Some of these provincial and municipal leaders too were given an opportunity to assure Mao of their support before the purge of September 1971. Four provincial MDs -- Liaoning, Shansi, Ninghsia, and Tsinghai -- have apparently been given new commanders since the purge, but in at least three of these cases the ex-commander remains in favor and in another key post.

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*\*At least three second-ranking provincial secretaries -- in Chekiang, Fukien, and Hupei -- are believed to have been purged with Lin's group. All were PLA men, two of them Air Force officers.*

Eighteen provincial MD commanders or first political officers, or their equivalents -- leaders of armies, for example -- are presently missing. None of the missing has thus far been named in Party documents and briefings as implicated with Lin's group, but some may yet be. Here again, some Lin/Huang proteges remain active and in apparent favor.

As at the regional level, some provincial military leaders who are concurrently the provincial first secretaries may have to give up one of their posts. There has been only one case (Jen Jung in Tibet) since the purge in which an individual has been solidly identified as holding the top military and political posts concurrently.\* Moreover, there have been some cases in which positive action has apparently been taken to deprive a leader of one of his posts, or to prevent a military leader from filling a vacant political post. For example, in both Shansi and Ninghsia the commander/first secretary has apparently been replaced as commander while remaining as first secretary; in Hunan, the first secretary of which was transferred to Peking, neither of the military men who were second-and-third-ranking secretaries has been moved up; and similarly, in Tsinghai, the first secretary either retains the title after his transfer to Peking or it has been withheld from the ranking military figures in the province. There is no apparent intention to remove the military leaders from all political posts or the political leaders from all military posts, but the earlier concentrations of power

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*\*Again, the media have been evasive, suggesting indecision. E.g. a first secretary is identified as a political officer rather than first, or as a political officer of the MR rather than first political officer of the MD, or as a "responsible person."*

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may be reduced. Also, more old Party cadres may become political officers (cf. the recent appointments of Li Ta-chang in the Chengtu MR and of Wang Hung-wen to the Shanghai Garrison).

The Present First Team: Mao (who is demonstrably not incapacitated) looks to be still the Party's dominant figure, in the terms in which he described his situation to Edgar Snow in late 1970; that is, he points the general direction, formulates or approves the formulation of the regime's principal policies, and signs directives, leaving day-to-day operations to Chou En-lai and Chou's Party apparatus and government machinery. And he is probably still dominant in the same sense as seemed to be the case prior to the purge of Lin Piao and his proteges: namely, that he has the power to elevate or to purge any other Party leader or small group of leaders.

It should be noted that Mao's domination appears to be increasingly qualified in important respects. He is old, his health is probably deteriorating, he is absent from Peking much of the time. It seems doubtful that he could point China in any general direction other than the one he has been taking since the Ninth Party Congress -- doubtful, that is, that he could turn China hard left again. He relies for the formulation of many and the implementation of all policies primarily on a man, Chou En-lai, whose predilections are not the same as his. He has probably (as always before) created new opponents in the latest purge. He has lost prestige for his demonstrated bad judgment in selecting successors

He is still heavily dependent on the PLA for governing China outside Peking. Should he change his mind again and try to purge Chou En-lai and Chou's group (in favor, say, of the civilian radicals), or try to return the PLA rapidly to its traditional role (replacing all of the PLA figures -- including Lin's proteges --

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who head Party committees throughout China), there is considerable doubt that he could do it; it took him more than four years to purge Liu Shao-chi and his proteges, about two years to purge Lin Piao's group, and his time is running out. Increasingly, his lieutenants will be looking past him to the post-Mao situation, trying to secure their own positions by forming alliances and reaching agreements on policy with other leaders. Moreover, [ ] this has probably already set off a process in which developments and decisions increasingly get away from Mao.\*

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Nevertheless, the main lesson of the past ten years, for other Party leaders, has to be that one challenges Mao, or takes action behind Mao's back, only at great peril. Though somewhat tarnished, Mao is still the boss, still the source of ultimate authority. Mao has shown that he alone has been able to command the sufficient allegiance of other Party leaders in a showdown with another Party leader or group. One would suppose that other Party leaders, while making what arrangements they can for their futures, would continue to try above all not to provoke the old man's suspicion or hostility. The chief near-term threat to Mao from other leaders looks still to be the possibility of assassination, commissioned by some comrade more intelligent and circumspect than Lin Piao. Mao's fear of assassination, evident in 1965 and stimulated again by the Lin Piao case, may have been a factor in his failure to appear as usual for May Day.

Below Mao's level, as noted often before, the situation in the Chinese leadership can never be described as "stable," because Mao himself is not stable. Not even Chou En-lai, now clearly his favorite lieutenant, can regard himself as invulnerable. But Chou seems to manage his relationship with Mao very well, and seems to

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*\*Mao was out of sight from late February to late June, failing in that period to meet with two distinguished visitors whom he probably would have met if he had been feeling up to it. He reappeared for Madame Bandaranaike in June, and met another foreign visitor soon thereafter.*



be in a strong position to resist any challenge by any leader below Mao's level. As the Party's de facto secretary-general, he is at the top of the Party apparatus, now supervised (and probably loosely) by Mao only. In this role he has probably acquired supervisory authority over the daily operations of the MAC and his old friend Yeh Chien-ying (who is also responsible to Mao as chairman of the MAC). He remains at the head of the government, directing the work of a very active vice-premier (his friend Li Hsien-nien) and of another vice-premier and old friend (Nieh Jung-chen) who may be becoming active again, and of what is still a large number of commissions and ministries, including the Ministry of National Defense (Yeh Chien-ying again). The general direction of Chinese policy -- both domestic and foreign -- in the past three years has clearly been congenial to Chou, and he himself has probably formulated some of the most important of these policies, getting Mao's approval and giving Mao the credit. President Nixon's visit was a visible personal triumph for Chou.

Chou is careful not to commit the mistake committed by Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao: he is careful, that is, not to appear to be challenging or rivalling Mao. As observed during President Nixon's visit, Chou is very deferential to Mao: he gives Mao the credit for formulating even those policies which he has himself formulated (even trifling things, such as the table-tennis team's slogan of "friendship first, competition second," which was original with Chou), and he is careful to get Mao's approval for each important step he takes, for example in drafting a joint communique. As noted above, even Chou is not truly safe; but it seems likely that the very clever and experienced Chou will survive and prosper.

Mao and Chou are now the only two primary leaders. They seem to be operating with a relatively small central team, as was the case in the year prior to the Ninth Party Congress of April 1969. Seven members of that 14-man

elite team of 1968-69 have survived: Mao, Chou, Madame Mao, the propaganda specialists Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan, and the security specialists Kang Sheng and Wang Tung-hsing. (However, two of these, Madame Mao and Kang, appear to be little active, in effect set aside.) The six purged were two members of the Politburo standing committee (Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta) and four close proteges of Lin's. Another security specialist (Hsieh Fu-chih) died in favor. The missing faces appear to have been replaced by: (a) five or six military leaders, Yeh Chien-ying, Li Te-sheng, Su Yu, Chiang Tsai-chien, Wang Hsin-ting, and perhaps Liu Hsien-chuan; (b) the three old Party cadres Chi Teng-kuei, Hua Kuo-feng and Wu Te; (c) Chou's factotum Li Hsien-nien; and (d) the foreign affairs specialists Keng Piao and Chi Peng-fei. Several of these who are not now members of the Politburo are expected to be added to that body in the course of restoring it to a strength of 20 or more. One recent appearance of "leading members of the...Party and state" has suggested that the old Marshal Hsu Hsiang-chien may be restored to the Politburo, that the veteran Navy commander Hsiao Ching-kuang may be added, and that the very old (80) writer Kuo Mo-jo may also be under consideration. All CCP Politburos have included venerable figures of little importance, like Hsu and Kuo.

Prior to the latest purges, the organizational core of power had been the Politburo standing committee, which made those decisions which the Party's officers (then Mao and Lin) had not already made, including the decisions as to which matters to pass to the full Politburo for discussion and a possible vote. If the standing committee is again active, the obvious candidates for the vacancies are Yeh Chien-ying, Li Hsien-nien (both close to Chou), and one or more of the younger people more closely identified with Mao himself (i.e. Chang or Yao).

The most important functions of the central Party apparatus are those of control of the military establishment,



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political control of economic organs, political security (investigation and evaluation), Party organizational work, propaganda, and liaison with foreign Communist parties. The ranking figures in these fields are all members of the small team named above.

The standing committee of the MAC now probably consists more or less of Yeh, the less active vice-chairmen Hsu Hsiang-chien and Nieh Jung-chen, the GPD director Li Te-sheng, the former C/S Su Yu, the deputy chiefs Chiang Tsai-chien and Hsiang Chung-hua and Wang Hsin-ting (Wang has been reported as acting C/S), the militarily unlocated Liu Hsien-chuan, Hsiao Ching-kuang, the Peking Garrison commander Wu Chung and first political officer Wu Te, the Politburo alternates Wang Tung-hsing and Chi Teng-kuei, Deputy Minister of Defense Wang Shu-sheng, and some Military Region leaders who do not often get to Peking. The economic specialist on the first team is Li Hsien-nien, and Hua Kuo-feng is said to be in training for this work (which he used to do in Hunan). Political security looks to be primarily in the hands of Mao's man Wang Tung-hsing, who still heads the Central Committee staff office, with assists from Li Te-sheng and Wu Te. Party organizational work is apparently being supervised by either Chang Chun-chiao or Hua Kuo-feng (or possibly both), although a PLA officer may be the director of the Organization Department. Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan still supervise propaganda work, and Yao may be the director of the Propaganda Department. The International Liaison Department is known to be headed by Keng Piao.

It is still not known whether Chou En-lai as de facto secretary-general is working with a small de facto secretariat or simply with the MAC leaders and central

department chiefs named above.\* The obvious candidates for a Secretariat include the obvious candidates for the Politburo standing committee -- Yeh, Li, Chang, Yao -- plus, one would think, Wang Tung-hsing and Hua Kuo-feng. The necessary specialties would be represented in such a group.

Will this team survive? or will this one too lose half of its members in another convulsion, when they are found to be "disloyal" to Mao, refusing to accept his institutional arrangements or to carry out his policies?

Another genuine challenge to Mao seems unlikely. Although this judgment proved to be mistaken in the case of Lin Piao and his closest proteges, Chou En-lai and his friends and proteges ought to be happy with the present arrangements and policies. It will take some time -- one would think, years -- to exhaust the possibilities of the present policies and thus pose the issue of "loyalty" in a sharp form by a sudden reversal of course. Apart from the question of whether Mao still has "years," Chou at least has always been able to execute these reversals. The present military leaders, some of them close to Chou, look to be both more docile and under better control than Lin's group -- and are not proteges of a single military leader, as were those purged with Lin Piao. The remaining civilian "radicals" of the old central CRG may be less than happy with the present policies, but they have no base of power from which to challenge them; the most important and active of these "radicals," Chang and Yao, with Chi Teng-kuei and perhaps soon Hua Kuo-feng, constitute the

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relatively young group in the Politburo, those who, if they remain on their good behavior, have some chance of remaining in the leadership for many years to come.

Mao himself seems to remain the principal threat to the members of this team. It is hard at best to carry out Mao's policies to his satisfaction, even without the problems of abrupt reversals of course and the search for scapegoats. Under the pressure of Mao's demands -- currently the demands for a Party apparatus and military establishment under strict civilian control, and (again in recognition of realities) for repudiation of the "ultra-left" excesses of the Cultural Revolution -- any given leader can be found to be a secret sympathizer with Lin Piao, or to be engaged in "conspiracy," or to be deliberately obstructing Mao's policies. Moreover, the still-mismatched groups of Mao's lieutenants can be expected to continue to compete for Mao's favor, even if they do not challenge Mao himself in any way. Thus it can be judged with some confidence that some members of Mao's current central team -- both military and civilian -- will fall before Mao dies. Should Mao die before Chou, Chou could probably dominate the leadership (although not to the degree that Mao has dominated it), and, if so, could be expected to make further changes, reducing the importance of whatever "radical" ideologues remain. Should both Mao and Chou die in the next year or two, no single figure among the current leaders would seem strong enough to dominate the Party in any sense. There would have to be a "collective," whether called that or not. Ironically, the PLA, which has been put down so hard in the past year, would in those circumstances probably be in the best position to provide the dominant group or the dominant members of the group.